

THE COMING IMMIGRATION DEBATE / THE PLUTONIUM FALLACY

The

Atlantic Monthly

APRIL 1995

AN EXPLOSION OF GREEN

Not the spotted owl but the vast reforestation of the eastern United States is the most important environmental story in the nation—one with worldwide implications

BY
BILL McKIBBEN

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Mike Sullivan uses fluorescent lighting in his house—to conserve electricity. He uses a drip irrigation system in his yard—to conserve water. And he bought his Saturn wagon, well, to conserve money.

This is not to say Mike is a contemporary tightwad by any means. He's a seventh grade math teacher—who, understandably, views life a little like a latter-day Pythagoras.

So we weren't surprised when we asked Mike about his Saturn and his face lit up as he described how little a Saturn costs him to own by his own linear calculations.

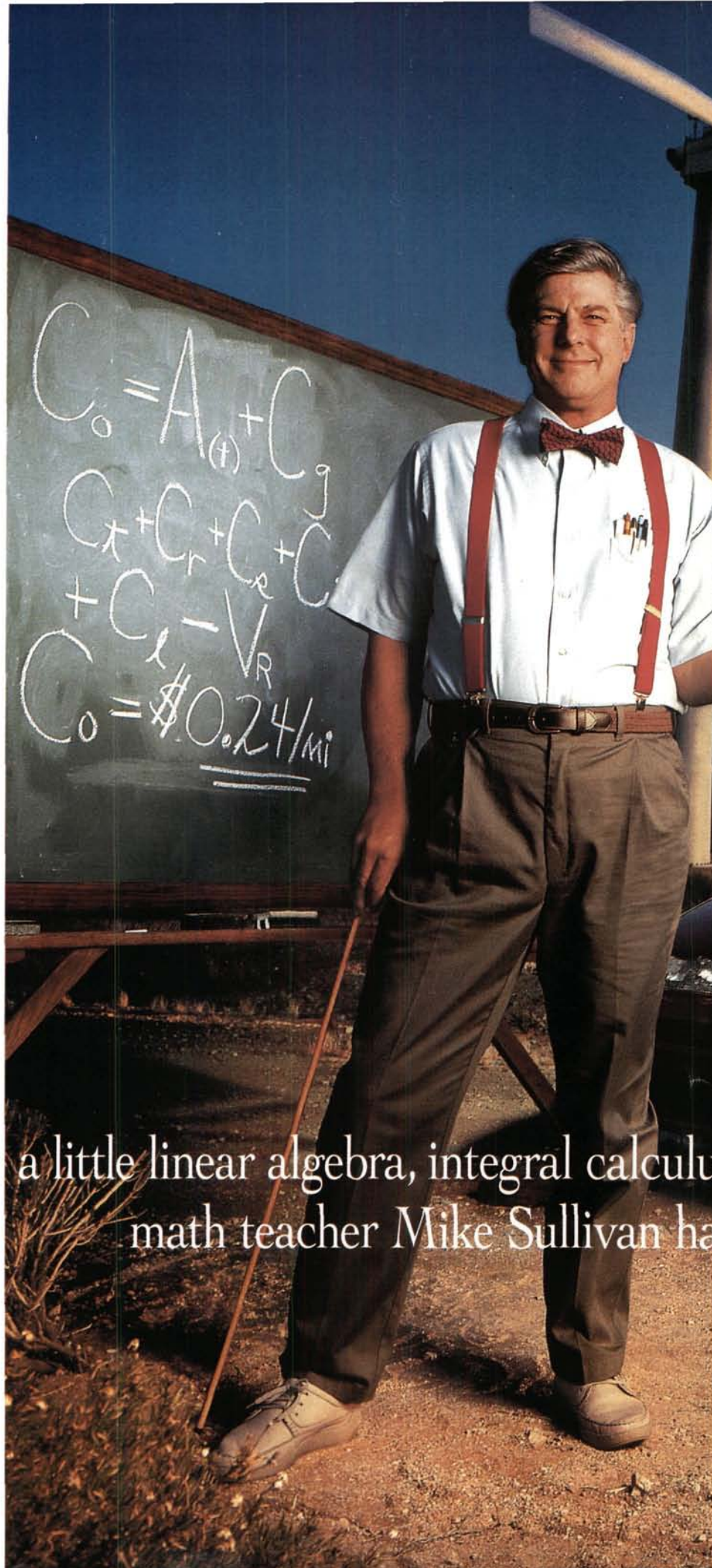
Basically, Mike added his buying cost to the cost of tires, repairs, maintenance, insurance and license for five years, subtracted the resale value, then divided by 60,000 miles and came out with what it would typically cost him to own a Saturn. Or, about twenty-four cents a mile.

Of course, it's not just the Saturn Mike calculates down to the penny. He figures his Saturn costs

By using a little linear algebra, integral calculus, and a little math teacher Mike Sullivan has

him a lot less to operate than the pickup truck he owns...and, well, just a bit more than his lawnmower.

Now granted, the Saturn's not much of a mulcher, but Mike says it's a whole lot more fun.



*Mike bought his Saturn at
Saturn of Bakersfield from
David Lopez, who hopes no one
asks him to explain this.*

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~~The Saturnally have 276~~

*Sir Isaac Newton—or even a
Mike Sullivan—to discover
one of the little-known joys of
owning a Saturn. Something
called The 1994 Complete Car
Cost Guide by IntelliChoice®,
Inc. does a lot of the noodle*



*work for you. They calculate
all the costs of owning a car
for five years. (Of course, own-
ership costs will vary from car
to car.) When they add it all up,
Saturns that are rated have one
of the lowest ownership costs in
their class. But, if you feel like
you missed all the “fun,” you can
always integrate the functions
over time and bunker down with
a few polynomial equations.*

and a few polynomial equations,
discovered the joys of owning a Saturn.

Mike Sullivan is pictured with a 1995 Saturn SW2. M.S.R.P. for the 1995 Saturn SW2 is \$15,000.
including retailer prep and 16 wheels. Tax, license, transportation and other options are extra. For more



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A Different Kind of Car*

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Frida Kahlo (Mexico), *Naturaleza muerta: pitahayas*, 1938, Madison Art Center, Wisconsin, Bequest of Rudolph and Louise Langer



Alicia Penalba (Argentina), *Faun des Mers*, 1959, Contemporary Collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art



They speak the same language.
Yet each has something very different to say.

Mari Matar O'Neill (Puerto Rico), *Falsaje en Fuego #2 Autorretrato*, 1992, Collection Mr. and Mrs. Pedro Muñoz Marín, San Juan, Puerto Rico



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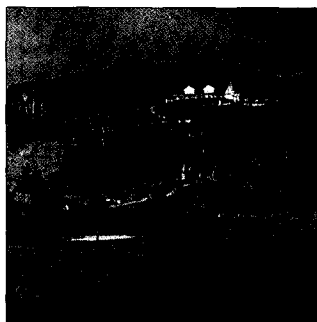
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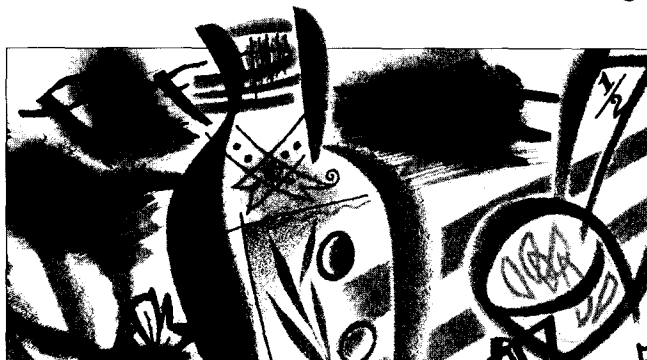
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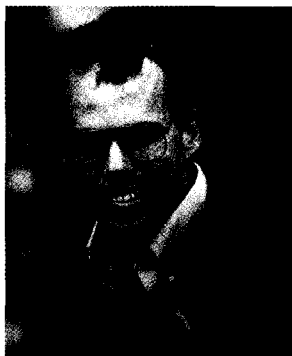


745 BOYLSTON STREET

"STRANGE that so few ever come to the woods to see how the pine lives and grows and spires, lifting its evergreen arms to the light,—to see its perfect success." Henry David Thoreau published those words in these pages in 1858, when *The Atlantic Monthly* was less than a year old. Farmland in the eastern United States was in its period of greatest extent, and what remained of the great primeval forest was valued, as Thoreau went on to observe, chiefly for the lumber and turpentine it could yield.

But even as Thoreau made these comments, the situation was changing. Owing to a combination of natural and economic factors, and without anyone's say-so, the eastern forest has reclaimed pride of place—a fact of considerable consequence. That is the subject of this month's cover story, Bill McKibben's "An Explosion of Green."

This magazine has been fortunate over the years to have been host to some of North America's finest writers about nature and the environment: Thoreau, of course, and also John Burroughs, John Muir, Rachel Carson, Farley Mowat, and Wallace Stegner. To this list must now be added the name of Bill McKibben. McKibben's work first came to national at-



NANCIE BATTAGLIA

tention in 1989, with the publication of *The End of Nature*. In this disturbing and provocative book McKibben argued that owing to man-made environmental changes that are global in character, nature had ceased to be a force independent of human beings. "More and more frequently," he wrote, "these changes will clash with our perceptions, until, finally, our sense of nature as eternal and separate is washed away, and we will see all too clearly what we have done."

In his second book, *The Age of Missing Information* (1992), McKibben sought to understand why corrective action with regard to the environment is so difficult to sustain. McKibben describes his next book, *Hope, Human and Wild*, which will be published this fall by Little, Brown, as being "about places that give me hope for an environmental recovery."

McKibben's writing is richly textured and at times deeply personal. His outdoor life in the Adirondacks is very much a part of his work, and elicits some of the finer strains of his sensibility. As Thoreau pointed out, it isn't only the lumberman who makes things out of trees. So does the poet—"who loves them as his own shadow in the air, and lets them stand." —THE EDITORS

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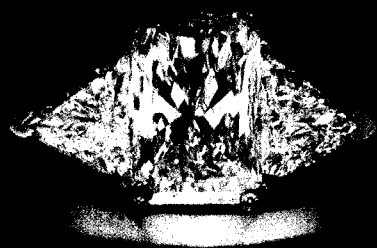
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LETTERS

Health-Care Reform

There is much to James Fallows's thesis that misinformation about President Clinton's health-care-reform plan, more than clumsy tactics by the White House, led to the plan's demise ("A Triumph of Misinformation," January *Atlantic*). If the President erred, he did so by taking at face value the much-mouthed allegiance to a one-tier health system that Americans swear in their responses to public-opinion surveys. For the most part, the length and complexity of the President's bill reflected his desire to extract a roughly egalitarian distribution of health care from a health system driven by market forces. That egalitarian precept, more than mere tactics, doomed the President's plan from the outset.

Americans are fond of saying that they all seek the same end in health policy and merely quibble about the means to get there. For example, if one asks Americans openly, "To the extent that a health system can make it possible, should a gas-station attendant (and his or her children) have the same chance of a healthy life, and the same chance of a cure from a given illness, as a corporate executive (and his or her children)?" the usual response is an unreserved "Of course!" But that is pure posturing. As was evident from the congressional debate on health-care reform, American legislators (and, presumably, the American people as well) do not at all share a social ethic on this point. By international standards they are arrayed along an unusually wide ideological spectrum.

At one extreme of that spectrum are those who, like the President, view health care as a social good that is to be shared by all who need it, on equal terms, regardless of the individual patient's ability to pay for care. That view implies a collective financing of health care, strongly guided by the redistributive hand of government. At the other extreme, however,

are those who view health care as just another private-consumption good, the procurement and financing of which are the individual's responsibility, except in truly catastrophic cases. That view is nourished by the writings of prominent American economists—among them the Nobel laureate Milton Friedman, who proposed, in *The Wall Street Journal* of November 12, 1991, that an ideal health-insurance policy would be one in which the individual household faced a deductible equal to the lower of \$20,000 a year or 30 percent of the household's income during the prior two years, which would impose on a family with an income of \$20,000 a year a deductible of \$12,000 a year.

The working majority of the United States Congress sits only slightly to the left of Friedman's quite extreme view, and far to the right of the President's. That working majority views health care as similar to other necessities, such as food, of which all Americans should, perhaps, be guaranteed a basic minimum, but the quantity and quality of which can vary systematically by income class. It is the ideology that once again carried the day in the great health-care-reform battle of 1993–1994.

Although the "health care is just like food" people won that battle squarely, they cannot be said to have won it fairly, for they never made their position clear to the public. Instead of stating their preference for rationing by income class forthrightly, so that the public could judge it, they camouflaged it in mellow code words such as "individual responsibility," "free choice along the cost-quality trade-off curve," the "freedom to purchase insurance coverage or not," and "empowerment"—code words that have a soothing ring but add up to "income-based rationing" just the same. Furthermore, as Fallows demonstrates convincingly, some of the participants in the debate descended to the most egregious forms of misinformation. In this arena the first prize surely goes to the syndicated

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The Atlantic Monthly

columnist George Will, for his hysterical (and false) assertion that under the President's plan Americans who purchased health services deemed unnecessary by the government could face a fifteen-year jail term. *Newsweek*, the willing conduit for that falsehood, should share his dubious prize.

Uwe E. Reinhardt
*Woodrow Wilson School of Public and
International Affairs
Princeton, N.J.*

The real tragedy of the reform story is that grassroots voters and most of the involved interest groups wanted the 103rd Congress to pass a universal-health-insurance program, and the Clintons, with Ira Magaziner's assistance, snatched defeat out of the jaws of victory. What could have passed was an employer-mandated universal-health-insurance program without the mandated regional alliances that would regulate health-insurance premiums and provider prices. The turning point in the campaign occurred when President Clinton refused to abandon all that regulatory baggage in his State of the Union message at the end of January, 1994, at a time when two out of three national public-opinion polls still showed that the public favored his proposal. Because of Clinton's decision to offer no specific compromises in the proposal, a week later all the major uncommitted business groups—the Business Roundtable, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers—one by one withdrew their support for the mandated financing approach. Without some major business backing, no conservative Democrat or moderate Republican could support mandated coverage, and the Clinton plan and the employer mandate were dead. The President's plan never again attained majority support in any of the public-opinion polls.

The fact that Magaziner is still blaming Senator Robert Byrd for not permitting the proposal to be included in the budget package, where it would have required only a simple-majority vote, is evidence that he still does not understand the politics of health-care reform. Successful health-care reform must have the support of both Democrats and Republicans and, more important, both liberals and conservatives—just as the Social Se-

curity Act in 1935 and Medicare in 1965 did. It could not have been enacted as the President's budget was, passed on a bipartisan basis. A bipartisan consensus could have been forged in the 103rd Congress if the Clintons and Magaziner had properly understood the issue—or had just listened to the advice of others who were more politically knowledgeable, among them Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

David F. Drake
Chicago, Ill.

James Fallows's conclusion, that a better-informed debate would have produced a bill providing universal coverage, is wrong.

Without the Fisher Body sit-down strike we would never have had the Wagner Act; without Freedom Summer we would not have had the Voting Rights Act. It was not the special interests or the Administration's unsuccessful effort to counter them that killed health-care reform; it was what did not happen.

Those of us who supported the President's plan treated it like it was NAFTA. Traditional methods, such as letters to members of Congress and letters to the editor, were no match for the multi-million-dollar fear campaign.

Interest groups that opposed health-care reform paid no price for their obstruction. Fast-food establishments and chain stores were not held accountable for failing to provide for their workers. Insurance companies were not confronted with the appalling bureaucratic costs they impose upon providers. Providers were never confronted with the overcapacity of high-tech equipment and other management boondoggles. Although these and other abuses of the present system were sometimes mentioned, no sustained effort was made to hold the interest groups accountable.

The health-care debate needs more letters to CEOs and fewer to Congress, more petitions to trade associations and fewer letters to the editor, more picket lines and fewer rallies, more Saul Alinsky and less League of Women Voters.

No President has the power to deliver on an issue of this kind, and the day we recognize that is the day we win.

Alice Marie Marshall
*Health Security Education Project
Arlington, Va.*

Johnson on Fallows

Chalmers Johnson's review of James Fallows's new book, *Looking at the Sun* ("Intellectual Warfare," January *Atlantic*) was misguided. I admire Fallows's writing talents and respect the time and effort he put into the book, but he and other revisionists have unfortunately gotten caught in a time warp: by the time the revisionist school gained ascendance, the reality it sought to define as a static entity had begun to change. Japan is neither a carbon copy of the United States nor an immutable, unstoppable alien system of state-engineered capitalism intent on dominating the world and posing a mortal threat to the American economy. Rather, as Johnson pointed out in his seminal book on MITI thirteen years ago, Japan has been a capitalist development state using a government-guided export-growth model to catch up to the Western industrial powers. Nor is there anything particularly novel about the state's having a substantial role in the economy, as should be evident from even a cursory look at France, Germany, or pre-Thatcher

England. Indeed, I suspect that if France or Germany had been put in the global position that Japan and others in East Asia found themselves in, it would have adopted very similar policies.

Like Fallows, Johnson sets up a convenient straw man, conventional Anglo-American economic theory, and, of course, proceeds to demolish it. Since when has any government taken Adam Smith as Holy Writ? Whether it was the U.S. government's role in westward expansion in the past century, the New Deal in the 1930s, or the Cold War role of the Pentagon in shaping industrial policy (where did computer advances and the aerospace industry come from?), government has played an important role in the U.S. economy. Whether it was the Chrysler bailout, the U.S.-Japan semiconductor agreement, or tax policy, rhetoric notwithstanding both parties have used the state to influence the private-sector economy.

Like many other theories of change over the past decade, the notion that the Japanese system is uniquely successful is a theory in search of reality. Yet this notion is the thesis of Fallows's book, not

merely a warning to unsuspecting Americans about the rise of Asia, as Johnson portrays it.

Two other points raised by Johnson must be answered. He is flat out wrong in arguing that the U.S. government suffers from a dearth of access to Asian expertise and that the American people will "feel betrayed and angry" at not being warned about Asia's challenge.

On the first point, before the current Administration—which has systematically avoided putting any experienced Asia specialists in any senior policy positions above deputy assistant secretary—quite a few Asia hands occupied senior policy positions. The problem is not lack of access but a decidedly Eurocentric view dominating U.S. foreign policy and, until recently, preoccupation (not without cause) with a narrowly focused Cold War security agenda.

As for warning about the Asian challenge, one can look back to MacArthur, half a century ago. For more than a decade top U.S. officials have raised this challenge. Then-undersecretary Lawrence Eagleburger's 1983 statement about the center of gravity shifting to the Pacific



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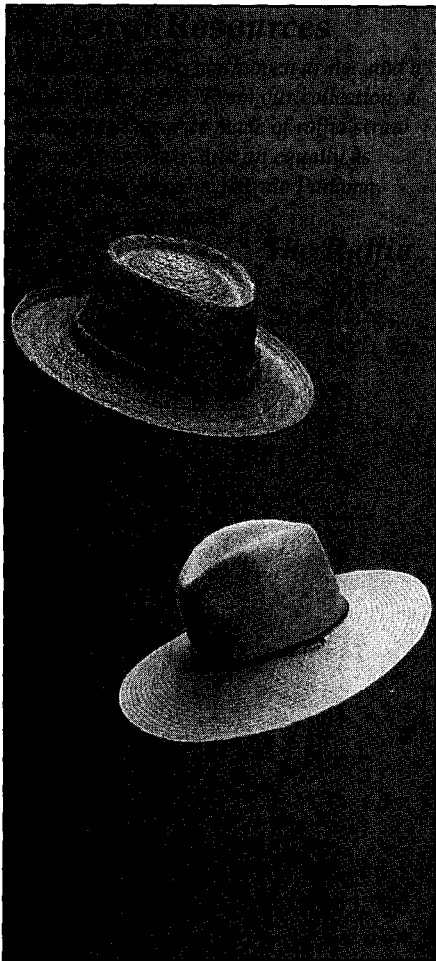
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comes to mind. Also Secretary of State George Shultz's numerous speeches, capped by his 1988 farewell tour of Asia. And during the previous Administration dozens of speeches and articles, at senior levels all the way up to the President and the Secretary of State, pointed to the challenge from and importance of Asia. I know, because I had a hand in crafting many of them. Is it the fault of U.S. foreign or economic policies if 70 percent of the public gets its information from television and many prefer MTV or *Roseanne* to gearing up for global competition?

What really seems to trouble Johnson is an insufficient appreciation for Japan as the measure of success or failure, the lack of proactive industrial policies, and, presumably, protectionism as a policy response. Certainly, as I have mentioned, government policies can and do play a role in fixing, shaping, and assisting the market. And there is clearly room for improvement in collaboration with the private sector to enhance our competitiveness, from export and tax policies to education and training. But market forces are the bottom line. One need only look at the comeback of the U.S. auto industry, or American global competitiveness in most cutting-edge and emerging telecommunications, multimedia, and other information-economy sectors, to realize that Japan may not have all the answers and maybe, just maybe, something can be said for the other shore of the Pacific Rim.

Robert A. Manning

*Progressive Policy Institute
Washington, D.C.*

Chalmers Johnson replies:

If Robert A. Manning does not believe that Adam Smith is Holy Writ for governments in English-speaking countries, he missed the ideological dimension of the Cold War, is ignorant of what Sweden gives Nobel Prizes in economics for, and has paid no attention to the Dole-Gingrich revolution.

"Market forces are the bottom line," he writes. It is precisely because our officials use such excuses for nonperformance and Japan's officials do not that Japan has enjoyed more than a quarter of a century of record-setting trade surpluses at our expense. Of course Japan does not have all the answers, and neither Fallows nor I ever suggested it did. But Mr. Manning's clichés about America's restored compet-

itiveness simply ignore Japan's savings rates, K-12 educational achievements, and investment in research and development. That is why the rest of East Asia is emulating Japan and not us, and this is what Fallows is talking about in his book.

Supercars

The companion articles "Reinventing the Wheels" and "Beyond Efficiency" (January *Atlantic*) both involve themselves so much in imaginative solutions for the future that they steadfastly ignore a current reality. A fuel-efficient, space-efficient, and inexpensive solution to at least part of our enormous transportation problem is fully operational and available now.

The weight of this "solution" rarely exceeds 500 pounds, and although its fuel mileage often exceeds 50 mpg, it offers performance not found in automobiles off the racetrack. It takes up significantly less room than the automobile on the road and in parking lots. In fact, six of these vehicles can share a parking space that would barely accommodate a single automobile.

Sound too good to be true? It gets better. Our wonder vehicle already has a sales-and-service network in place worldwide, and enjoys such a loyal following that one manufacturer has sold out its entire 1995 production run of 93,000 machines in advance.

Our wonder machine is, of course, the motorcycle. For most of its existence the motorcycle has been the forgotten element in the transportation picture, more irritant than solution, more outlaw than savior.

One concern seems to pop up whenever motorcycles are mentioned: safety. But almost all of the danger to motorcyclists comes from automobiles. Motorcycle-only lanes would lower the danger level significantly, as would the presence of more motorcycles on the road, increasing drivers' awareness of the necessity for sharing the roads with two-wheeled vehicles. Furthermore, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and other organizations offer excellent rider training and safety courses, and protective gear grows more sophisticated and effective year by year. Finally, those who cite alarming statistics about motorcycle accident and injury rates should examine the accident rates for groups of riders noted for comparatively

responsible riding habits. Female riders and riders over forty boast much lower accident rates than their daredevil eighteen-to-twenty-five-year-old brethren.

Richard S. Holtzman Jr.
Albany, Calif.

Amorv B. Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins ("Reinventing the Wheels") claim that "an ultralight [weighing as little as 850 pounds] can be at least as safe as today's heavy steel cars, even if it collides head-on with a steel car at high speed." Other factors being equal, in a head-on collision the heavier vehicle will always be subject to lower forces than the lighter one. No technology, no matter how sophisticated, can overturn the basic laws of physics. Should "hypercars" come to pass, their drivers and passengers will be less safe than the occupants of conventional automobiles.

R. J. McLeod
Toronto, Ont.

Amorv B. Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins almost totally neglect the issue of electronic and computerized controls. For anyone except a single-issue environmentalist, fuel consumption is only one of several limitations on the automobile. These include urban congestion, safety (in the more comprehensive sense of avoiding crashes in the first place), pedestrian access, and, one might even add, speed limitations. Many of these can be addressed in large measure by using computers to direct vehicles on limited-access guideways, in what was known a couple of decades ago as Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) and is now known as the Intelligent Vehicle Highway System (IVHS).

But still more to the point, advanced automobiles, and transportation devices in general, are in competition for capital with other technologies, notably information technology in its pure form. Over the past fifteen years many prudent people financed a couple of generations of new computers by deferring the purchase of new cars. Over the next fifteen years they may well decide to finance the electronic gear needed for advanced telecommuting (for example, a high-grade videophone plus remote manipulation) the same way. The compelling reason for this is that once the equipment is in place, it gives a level of versatility that transcends anything an automobile can do. For example, one could telecommute to twenty differ-

ent locations each day without significant loss of time.

Telecommuting dovetails nicely with Mark Derr's counterproposals for pedestrianism and bicycle paths. I am surprised that Derr has not noticed this. Telecommuting introduces an element of choice into pedestrian commuting, and hence an ability to take account of the weather.

Andrew D. Todd
Philadelphia, Pa.

Amory B. Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins reply:

Our article was about cars, not motorcycles—which one of us (LHL) has long loved and ridden. Additional text deleted by the editors (it will be published elsewhere) described a comprehensive approach to transport, and emphasized that two-wheeled vehicles of many kinds, from motorcycles to pedal and electrically assisted bicycles, are important elements. So, we noted, is telecommunication: home videoconferencing, phone, fax, and E-mail already displace most of our personal travel.

Momentum transfer—familiar to one of us (ABL) as a physicist and to the other (LHL) as a firefighter who often extricates crash victims—means that in two-car collisions the heavier car will put its occupants less at risk and those of the lighter car correspondingly more at risk, *other things being equal*. But other things are emphatically not equal. The hypercar will protect its occupants better, and endanger those of other cars less, because other improvements more than offset its ultralight weight: as we summarized, "Materials and design are much more important to safety than mere mass, and the special structures needed to protect people don't weigh much." Technical details are published by Rocky Mountain Institute's Hypercar Center (Snowmass, CO 81654-9199; 'tmoore@rmi.org').

Criticizing our "neglect" of "electronic and computerized controls" is odd, because we wrote that hypercars will be "much more like computers with wheels than they are like cars with chips." Their tenfold larger and smarter onboard software is partly why their fuel economy will come with better safety, comfort, performance, and other attributes. The controls that Andrew Todd wants to add to them are *external*—part of the lavishly funded fad IVHS.

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We didn't advocate IVHS because we don't think it makes sense. A few of its technologies—electronic billing for road use, smarter traffic-signal controls, in-car navigation systems, and other ways to improve drivers' price signals and driving information—are fine and will be used in hypercars. But IVHS's central goal, "using computers to direct vehicles on limited-access guideways," is unsound. No one has satisfactorily explained how cars would get on and off, cope with failures (flat tires and the like), or suddenly change destination. System reliability could not achieve the required aerospace levels without enormous expense and central planning. And increasing road capacity, whether by building more roads or by packing more cars onto the same roads, will only stimulate more traffic. That is why we suggested instead full market competition to elicit and reward the cheapest means of getting around or of not needing to.

Beyond Efficiency

Mark Derr ("Beyond Efficiency," January *Atlantic*) does us all a disservice when he permits Andrew Frank to frame the debate over mass transit. Although Frank's technical innovations and visionary proposals may be useful and thought-provoking, his critique of the cause-and-effect relationship between transportation infrastructure and population density is way off target.

Derr writes, "'Mass transit was created to resolve crowding in cities in the late nineteenth century,' Andrew Frank says. 'In this country we have constructed a low-density society. Planners are wrong to want to re-create a nineteenth-century society.'"

Frank has it backward. American population centers, large and small, coalesced in the nineteenth century at the intersections or intermodal connections of different forms of mass transit and freight transfer, such as stagecoaches, trains, and boats traveling by sea, river, or canal. Before the invention and widespread use of automobiles, trolley lines spurred the growth of linear suburbs linked to urban centers. Thus mass-transit systems stimulated and directed development.

In the twentieth century the ship and railroad lobbies lost their political influ-

ence to the new oil and automobile interests, which bought up local trolley and bus lines in order to kill them off by neglect and force people into cars. The past sixty years of tremendous public subsidies for the automobile—in road construction, parking provisions, and a host of other sweeteners—is what constructed the car-dependent "low-density society" dispersed to cloverleaves and cul-de-sacs. To wish to reverse the appalling damage and waste this has inflicted on our society is not to re-create the nineteenth century but to stimulate growth in ways and places desirable for the twenty-first.

Frank's views appear consistent with the views of those who favor the shortsighted plan to reduce Amtrak passenger service, though it will cost the country many times over what savings are hoped for. Yes, "we" have indeed constructed a "low-density society," but only for those with the means to own a car and the privilege to go wherever they want, whenever they want, by themselves.

Richard Ewald
Westminster, Vt.

Mark Derr replies:

Richard Ewald appears confused. In the nineteenth century railroad magnates received for each mile of track they laid tens of thousands of acres of public land, which they then sold at considerable profit. They also decided where stations would be placed, making and breaking communities in the process. Given the constraints of rail travel and the obvious disadvantages of horses—including considerable urban pollution—it is hardly surprising that people embraced the mass-produced automobile. Populist politicians also seized upon it as the vehicle for breaking the monopolies of privately held railroads and urban transit systems. No one questions that the car culture is heavily subsidized, but no one has proposed a better alternative. In fact, people around the world, when they have a choice, generally opt for automobiles over trains and subways. Thus Andrew Frank's comment is appropriate and accurate. His ideas represent an intriguing attempt to marry the flexibility of the automobile to the efficiency of mass transit—hardly something to dismiss out of hand. The rest of the article presents other ways to relieve congestion and to provide transportation for those who do not drive. How Ewald leaps from there to

counting Frank among the people who want to reduce Amtrak passenger service is a mystery. Although the broad question of transportation between, as opposed to within, urban areas lies beyond the scope of my article, I believe that trains are well suited to those densely settled corridors—between Washington, D.C., and Boston, for example—that they can serve even more efficiently than planes.

Verdict, Please

The rebuttal by Peter Irons and Stephanie Guitton (Letters, January *Atlantic*) of Edward Lazarus's critique of their *May It Please the Court* audio tapes ("Electronic Hash," October *Atlantic*) was extremely disappointing. Their distasteful retort must not be allowed to pass without comment.

First, Irons and Guitton needlessly obfuscate the issue at hand by including Peter Irons's legal credentials. For what purpose? Lazarus never stated or implied that Irons was not qualified for the task. The fact that Irons belongs to "state and federal bars at every level, including the United States Supreme Court" is laudable, but bears little upon the singular contention that the tapes distort several important Supreme Court cases.

Second and more troubling, Irons and Guitton resort to ad hominem attacks upon the character of Edward Lazarus. First charging him with sexism and then closing with vague insinuations about the accuracy of his (unrelated) book simply undercuts their own defense.

Even if Lazarus's contentions constituted a personal attack, as Irons and Guitton clearly feel they do, it is not the case that "turnabout is fair play," as they declare. As Abraham Lincoln once wrote, "Truth is generally the best vindication against slander"—not the other way around.

Daniel J. Salemsen
Raleigh, N.C.

Peter Irons and Stephanie Guitton, in their reply to Edward Lazarus, state, "We plead not guilty and submit our appeal to your readers." Therefore, I shall submit my verdict: Irons and Guitton may be fine people individually, but acting together, as they do in responding to Lazarus, they are nitwits.

Their nitwittery is revealed in the sec-

ond paragraph of their letter, in which they accuse Lazarus of sexism. From time immemorial it has been the unfortunate habit of ideologues and other dogmatists, when presented with evidence of their iniquities, to raise their voices in righteous indignation and denounce their accusers as the currently popular flavor of heretic. Sexism and racism being the two most powerful heresies of this time, Guitton and Irons clearly intend to discredit Lazarus by hanging the sexist label on him. It is pitifully done. It is also cowardly, underhanded, and vile (not to mention unoriginal). Nothing else Irons and Guitton can say, now or in the future, can redeem them.

Curt A. Johnson
Livermore, Calif.

Advice & Consent

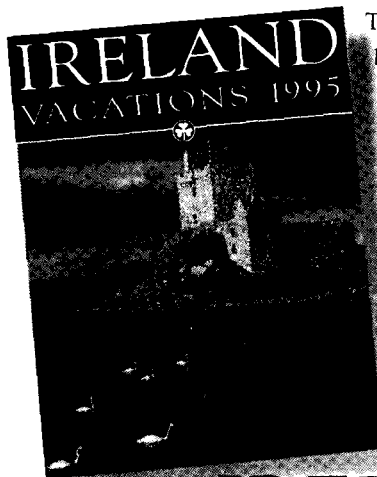
Robert D. Kaplan ("Eaten From Within," November *Atlantic*) places the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic in the company of Islamic and Sikh militants and pre-war Romanian fascists, ascribing the "elimination of Muslims" as the "key to his Orthodox Christian people's distress." He is supposed to have acquired these nasty views "through an exceedingly limited range of books—and little experience of an outer world inhabited by others who think differently."

There is no evidence that Dr. Karadzic ever called for either elimination of Muslims (some are obviously fighting on *his* side) or a system of government other than multiparty democracy. His aim during the present civil war is to ensure that the Serbs retain at least some of their patrimony (they owned most of the land in Bosnia-Herzegovina before the current conflict) and that they escape Muslim rule, which is associated with native SS divisions and genocide against Serbs that shook even their German masters in the recent past. His reasons for separation from the regime in Sarajevo are, arguably, more compelling than the Muslims' desire to separate from Yugoslavia.

Kaplan's assertion that Dr. Karadzic knows little of the world is odd. He is, after all, a published poet and psychiatrist, with postgraduate studies in—of all places—the United States.

George Nikolic
Woden, Australia

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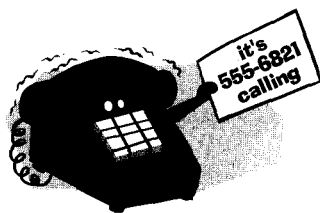
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Demographics

Starting this month students who take the Scholastic Assessment Test are likely to earn higher scores than their recent predecessors—regardless of their study habits. The April, 1995, version of the SAT represents the first recalibration of the test's scoring system in 54 years. In an effort to characterize test-takers more accurately, and to improve students' understanding of their scores, College Board officials have shifted the scales so that a mark of 500 will once again indicate an exactly average performance, as it did in 1941. Because of the much-heralded decline in students' skills, average scores had slipped to 424 (verbal) and 478 (math) as of last year.



Government

The telephone loses its remaining anonymity on April 12, when caller ID—subscribers to which can see the number of the party calling before they pick up the phone—becomes available on an interstate basis, by order of the Federal Communications Commission. (It is already available in most states.) Although many states allow services that automatically block the identification of calls from a given number, the FCC ruling stipulates that those wishing to guard the confidentiality of their numbers across state lines will have to dial a blocking code before each call. The ruling has been attacked as an erosion of privacy; in response the agency cites the potential of caller ID to limit telephone harassment and to reduce the possibility of fraud in activities such as telephone banking and home shopping.

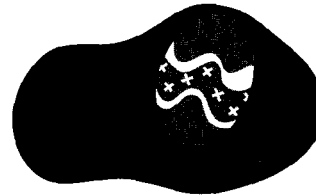
Environment

It is often observed that Third World countries suffer the environmental consequences of American consumerism, but this month offers a vivid illustration of a First World nation's bearing the brunt. Holland, which is the source of 70 percent of the millions of tulips currently in bloom across the United States, uses more than 175 tons of pesticides and soil fumigants each year to grow them. Partly as a result, its groundwater is highly contaminated. The country's growers, under a self-imposed mandate to halve their use of pesticides by the year 2000, are turning to alternative techniques to minimize pests and diseases, including crop rotation and localized fertilization of the soil. Varieties of tulips that require high levels of pesticides may be abandoned, and "ecotulips"—those requiring no pesticides at all—are being cultivated on a small scale.

Food

At least 31,000 kosher products—a record total—will be available in supermarkets this month, in anticipation of Passover on April 14. Observant Jews may nonetheless find some items in short supply: much of the kosher food sold during the month (and a majority sold throughout the year) is bought by non-Jews. Chief among this group are members of other religions with laws pertaining to the preparation of food, including Muslims (who also abstain from pork and are allowed to

eat kosher meat when meat from animals slaughtered according to Islamic law is unavailable), Seventh-Day Adventists, and Rastafarians. Vegetarians and others generally concerned with the purity of food are also increasingly drawn to kosher items. The burgeoning market for kosher food has spawned new kosher products (pasta made from matzoh meal, a line of low-calorie frozen dinners) and led to kosher certifications for conventional brands (M&M's candies, Coors beer).



The Skies

April 2, at 2:00 A.M. Daylight Saving Time begins; set clocks ahead one hour. 13, Venus and Saturn lie very close together in the eastern sky just before sunrise. 15, Full Moon, also known this month as the Egg or Grass Moon. A partial lunar eclipse begins about 7:40 A.M. EDT and reaches its midpoint two hours later, by which time it will be visible only in the western United States (the Moon will have set elsewhere). During the eclipse the Moon will for a time appear to touch the bright star Spica.

Health & Safety

This month poses particular hazards for foragers and nibbling children: many of the nation's most toxic plants and fungi are sprouting. Heading the list is water hemlock, a sweet-tasting plant sometimes called poison parsnip or false parsley, which, when ingested even in small quantities, can rapidly bring on convulsions and death (several children have died after merely using whistles made from the plant's root). Another prime offender: amanita mushrooms ("Death Angels" or "Death



Caps"), the ingestion of which—they can fool even experienced mushroom gatherers—can induce liver and kidney failure. The two plants together account for about 10 deaths each year—a surprisingly small number, given that no known antidotes exist and consumption often occurs in remote locales, far from medical attention. Other culprits include poke-weed, whose leaves are sometimes boiled for salads (if not cooked, or undercooked, they can cause severe gastroenteritis, as can the plant's root), and digitalis or foxglove, a key ingredient in some heart medications (the casual eating of foxglove causes nausea and irregular heartbeat).

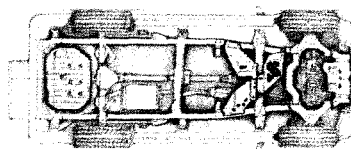
100 Years Ago

Albert H. Tolman, writing in the April, 1895, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The scientist asks only for the accepted, literal meaning of each word. The artist asks further: What is its history? what company has it kept? If it once bore a bad character, but has reformed, how long since it was received into good society? Does it sometimes forget its new surroundings, and, so to speak, wear its hat in the parlor? If the word has thoroughly reformed, or always borne a good character, what are its present tendencies? In its many different uses, are there any degrading or trivial offices which it performs? By all this interrogation, I mean that the artist considers the history, associations, and affinities of a word as truly as its simple, dictionary meaning."



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How many Wisians does it take to screw in a light bulb?

TWO years ago this March, on the feast day of Saint David, the patron saint of Wales, a lawyer named Rees Lloyd, whose professional distinctions include service as the general counsel of the Twm Siôn Cati Welsh-American Legal Defense, Education, and Development Fund, filed a lawsuit in California Superior Court against a half dozen prominent newspapers, magazines, and television stations. The plaintiffs were upset by the use in these media of terminology that constituted, in their view, a slur on the Welsh people. They sought an injunction and a declaratory judgment against the publication or broadcasting of such terminology.

Not long ago I received a note from Rees Lloyd ("a.k.a. Rhys Llwyd"), with whom, out of curiosity about the lawsuit, I had been in occasional correspondence. He acknowledged with regret that the final disposition of the case had not been in the plaintiffs' favor. As Judge John H. Leahy wrote in his opinion, "The remedies sought in this complaint are injunction and declaratory relief. Under the facts of this case, both would amount to a prior restraint on speech and would bump squarely up against the First Amendment. The First Amendment would win." Lloyd has vowed to appeal the decision.

I must confess that until hearing about this lawsuit I had not really thought of the Welsh, or of Welsh-Americans, as being on the world's ever-expanding roster of aggrieved parties. Given how touchy people and groups can be these days, I probably should have known better. No one, seemingly, is exempt. In 1993, for example, the New York Zoological Society decided to change its name to the Wildlife Conservation Society, believing that the word "zoo" had acquired a pejorative connotation—specific-

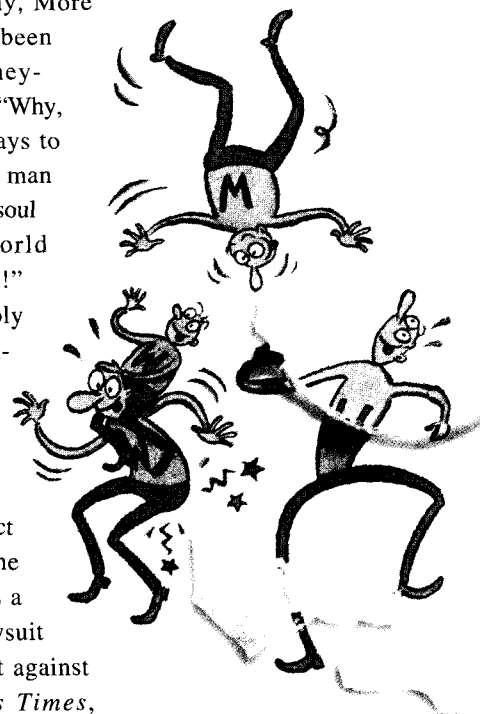
cally, its connotation in the phrase "this place is a zoo." It is only a matter of time, I expect, before the Wildlife Conservation Society begins lobbying, on the same grounds, to rename the species we currently know as snakes, asses, monkeys, and pigs.

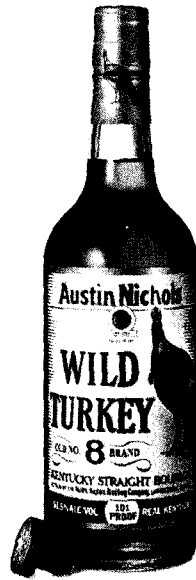
The complaint of the Welsh-Americans is not so frivolous. Their concern is with the verb "to welsh" or "to welch," as in "to welsh on a bet," and with the related noun form "welsher," as in this recent headline from *The Dallas Morning News*: "NOW'S TIME TO PIN SOCIAL SECURITY WELSHERS." There is no firm linguistic evidence linking this sense of "welsh" to the name for the people of Wales ("origin unkn.," says *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*), but given the frequency with which the name of the Welsh people has been added to other words in order to produce disparaging terminology, the chances that a link exists are high. A "welsh comb," for example, is the thumb and forefingers. A "welsh cricket" is a louse. A "welsh pearl" is a fake pearl. All these terms were given to us by the English, who have long reserved for the Welsh a special place in the taxonomy of their esteem. In Robert Bolt's play *A Man for All Seasons*, the character Richard Rich perjures himself before a jury, and by so doing condemns Sir Thomas More to death. In return for his perjured testimony, More knows, Rich has been appointed Attorney-General for Wales. "Why, Richard," More says to Rich, "it profits a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world . . . But for Wales!"

There is probably nothing the Welsh-American Legal Defense, Education, and Development Fund can do about the fact that this line in the play always draws a laugh. But the lawsuit the group brought against the *Los Angeles Times*,

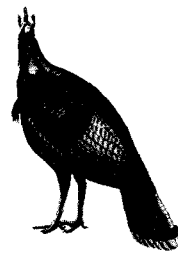
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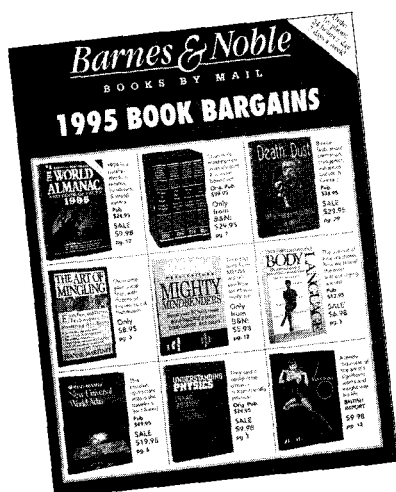
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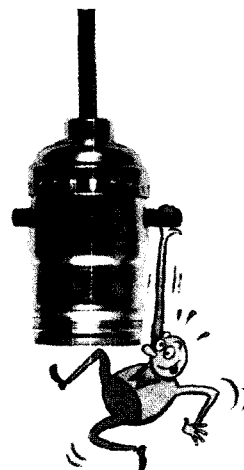
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Newsweek, *The Wall Street Journal*, the Universal Press Syndicate, the National Broadcasting Company, and the television station KNBC, in Los Angeles, did seek to enjoin these prominent media outlets from further use of the words "welsh" and "welsher." "By their publication of the ethnic slur 'welsher,'" the plaintiffs contended, "these powerful media degrade and defame the Welsh and Welsh-Americans in a manner in which the same media modernly do not, and dare not, defame and slander any other race, ethnic group, nationality, or people." I suspect that even Rees Lloyd knew that the lawsuit was constitutionally preposterous—the First Amendment protects far more offensive language. The aim, rather, was to shame the media into acquiescence. And in this the lawsuit partly succeeded: All but two of the defendants announced that their policy would henceforward be to prohibit the use of the pejorative terms. *Newsweek* and *The Wall Street Journal*, however, decided to dig in their heels and fight the suit. Now they have prevailed.

• • •

In thinking about this dispute, and others like it that have erupted down the years, I find myself wondering whether there is some way to pick a path through the muddle. No decent person wants to cause offense to other people. At the same time, few of us want to erode freedom of speech. Few of us, moreover, want to diminish the English language's variety of expression. And yet the fact remains that the suppression of "welsh" is only a start. The Welsh, after all, are not alone in having their name unfairly brought into unflattering associations.

It occurs to me that we can perhaps have it all by summoning into existence, for rhetorical purposes, a fictitious ethnic group—a "scapegroup," one might say—whose name could replace that of every other group mentioned in pejorative expressions and terminology and jokes. I even have a name for these fictitious people. A few years ago the American Jewish Committee sponsored a survey of American attitudes toward various ethnic groups, and they included a nonexistent group called Wisians as a way of helping to gauge the background attitude toward



ethnic groups in general. Although most respondents had the sense not to venture an opinion about the Wisians, about 40 percent went ahead and replied. They gave the Wisians a low favorability rating—4.12 on a scale of 9.0, which placed them below Greeks, white South

Africans, and Koreans, but above Guatemalans, Iranians, and Gypsies. "Wisian," I think, is worth a try.

Here are some contexts in which to use the word: Wisian courage. Wisian treat. To Wis on a bet. Wisian giving. The Wisian disease (which might have been prevented by the use of Wisian letters). To get your Wisian up. To take Wisian leave. Wisian measles. A Wisian's chance in hell. A Wisian standoff. Wisian roulette.

Why stop there? One encounters scores of behaviors and situations in daily life that cry out for a shorthand label. For instance, while standing in the express check-out line in the supermarket—"No more than 12 items, please," the sign says—you notice that the person in front of you has interpreted "item" to mean "species of item," and the cart is packed tight with, say, sixteen bottles of Coke (Item No. 1), a dozen containers of yogurt (Item No. 2), maybe eight bags of hot dog rolls, twenty cans of cat food, and so on. What we have here, I would propose, is an example of "Wisian calculus." Or say you're waiting to back into a parking space that another car is vacating, and a third car manages to sneak in first. Sorry, but you've been a victim of "Wisian protocol." Have you ever found yourself bounced around among bureaucrats or customer-service representatives, fruitlessly seeking a person who is actually able to help you? This is a "Wisian steeplechase," a procedure frequently brought to an end by a rude or testy remark on the part of your interlocutor (a "Wisian apology"). A "Wisian handshake" is, I would imagine, the kind that Getty extended to Pennzoil. A "Wisian chow bell" is a phone call from a salesman that comes during dinner.

As these few examples suggest, the opportunities for evoking this scapegroup are considerable. Until they get around to setting up a legal-defense fund, the Wisians may serve us very well indeed. ☞

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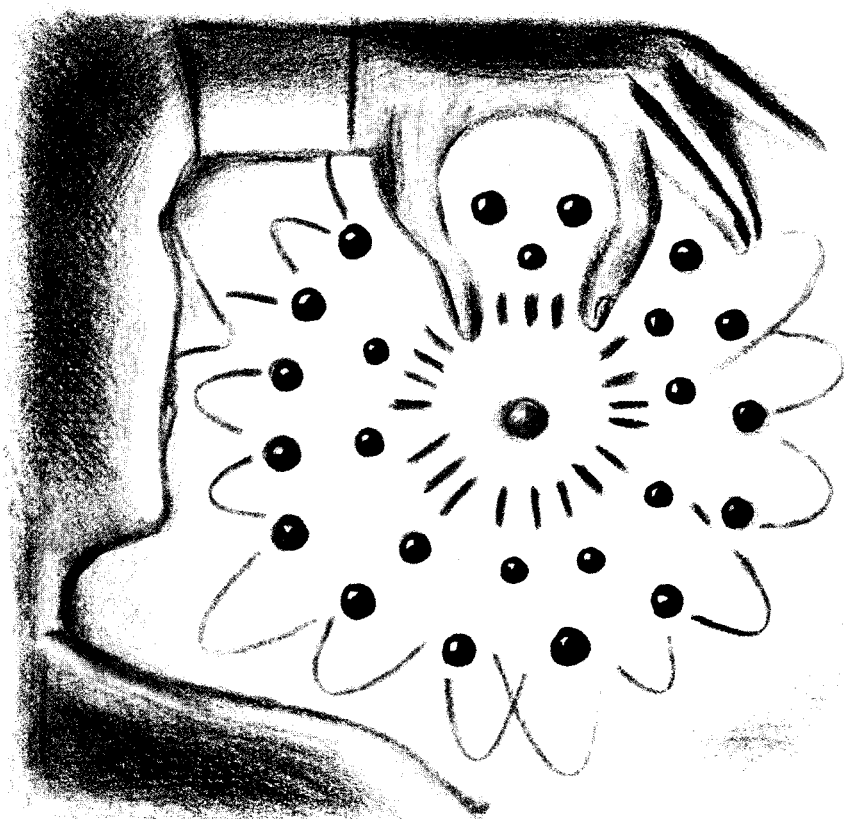
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Atomic Overreaction

*A close look at plutonium's unearned reputation
as the pre-eminent poison*

PLUTONIUM, the bogeyman of the atomic age, is in ever greater supply. Hundreds of tons are stockpiled around the world, in the form of unneeded bombs and unprocessed nuclear waste. What's more, the substance seems to be escaping its sanctuaries, whether by smuggling from Russia or environmental contamination at rusting weapons factories in the United States. Such stories—PLUTONIUM

ON THE LOOSE!—are invariably good for Page 1. Implicitly we understand that the threat cuts two ways. Plutonium is the bright flash over Nagasaki—the holocaust of an instant—and also “the most toxic substance known to man,” a kiss of death with a half-life of 24,000 years.

There is no disputing the bomb. But is plutonium's elemental nature as danger-

ous as alleged? The references to plutonium as the ultimate poison and carcinogen—by now they are rote in the literature of the anti-nuclear movement and in the media—have troubled me as a science writer. Their authority derives mainly from being repeated. Perhaps the most famous symbol of plutonium's mystique is Karen Silkwood, a worker at the Kerr-

McGee Nuclear Corporation who became contaminated with plutonium in 1974. After Silkwood was killed in a mysterious automobile accident later that year, her estate sued her employer, alleging that Silkwood's exposure to plutonium “guaranteed” that she would have contracted lung cancer had she lived. The jury found for the estate. A more recent cause of controversy was the newly publicized revelation, in 1993, that

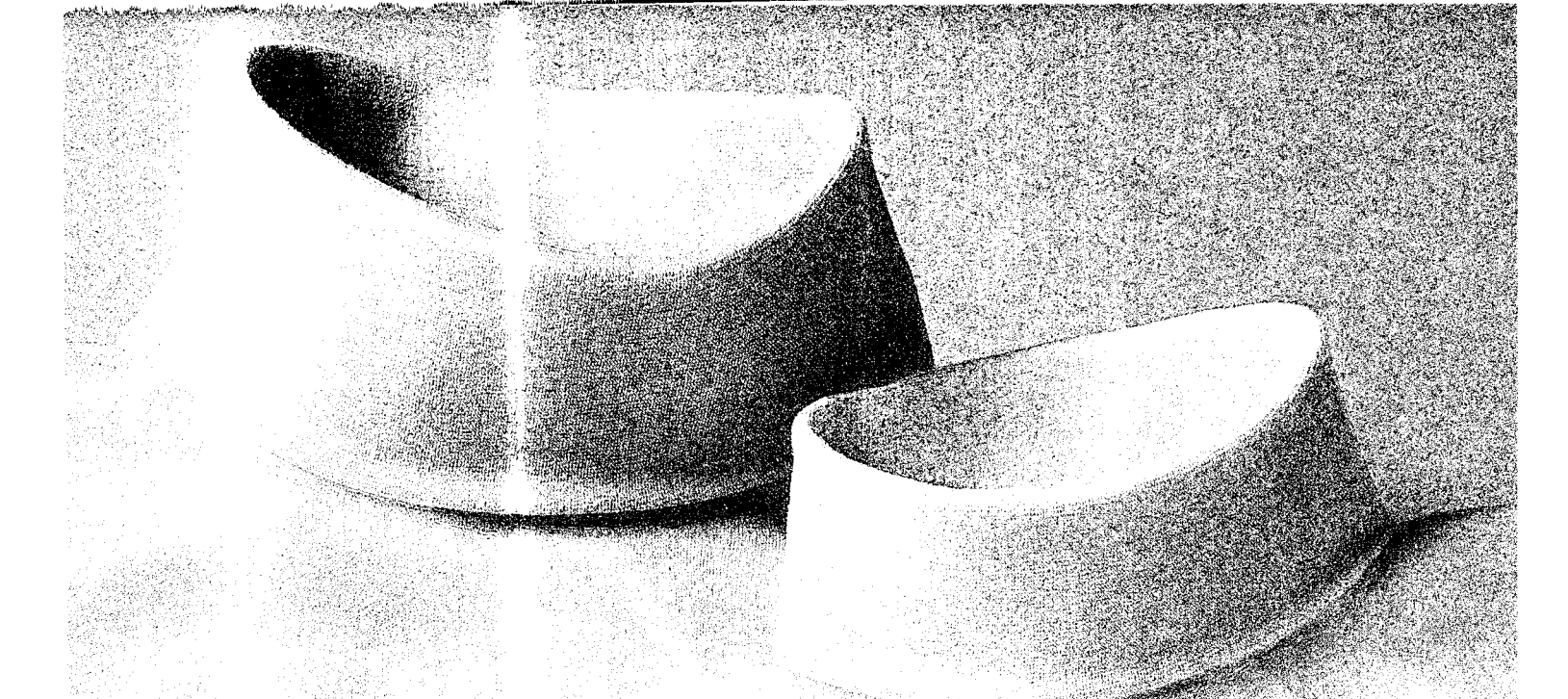
the U.S. government had secretly injected hospital patients with plutonium during the 1940s. The outrage seemed to spring as much from plutonium's reputation today as from the failure to obtain the consent of the subjects.

The real issue is whether plutonium's notoriety is based on scientific evidence. The injection experiments don't provide any; none of the patients died as a result of the doses. Indeed, in reviewing the fifty-year biomedical history of the substance, I found that nobody is known to have died from a disease that indisputably developed from contamination with plutonium. Laboratory animals have been caused to die, yes. Among weapons workers there have been lethal bursts of radiation from chain reactions of plutonium, but these effects are acute, as would be those from a bomb's radiation. There have recently been anecdotal reports about fatal disease among plutonium workers in Russia, where radiation protection has been lax, but no scientific documentation has emerged.

Whether plutonium causes disease is one question. The risk of exposure itself is a second. As far as the public is concerned, plutonium is dangerous only if very small particles become lodged in the lungs. It takes a considerable force to generate airborne particles from a heavy metal such as plutonium. A nuclear detonation is one way to do it, after which specks of plutonium oxide, along with other radioactive products, settle to earth as fallout. Anyone over the age of thirty has been carrying around traces of plutonium for years, owing to fallout from atomic-bomb testing. With the cessation of atmospheric testing, beginning in the early 1960s, the public's primary source of exposure to plutonium was closed off.

What about nuclear-reactor accidents? The main threat here is not airborne plutonium but radioactive fission products such as iodine-131 and cesium-137. No plutonium was dispersed as a result of the accident at Three Mile Island, in Pennsylvania, in 1979. Seven years later only a small amount was released during the much more serious accident at Chernobyl, in the Soviet Union. The major radiation doses were, again, from iodine-131 and cesium-137.

by Jeff Wheelwright



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THE fact remains that plutonium's reputation rests on no rigorous case studies of illness. How, then, did its reputation come about? The fathers of plutonium—conservative chemists—were the first to beat the drum about its dangers. They set a tone for public understanding at a time when hardly any plutonium existed.

Plutonium is a somewhat brittle, silvery metal that is 50 percent denser than lead. Its antecedent is uranium-238, one of the isotopes of uranium. U-238 is the inactive ingredient of reactor fuel. The active ingredient, uranium-235, undergoes fission and releases energy and neutrons. Some of the U-238 atoms absorb a neutron and thereby become plutonium-239. This new element, when concentrated, can be split even more readily than U-235. That is, less of it is required to make a nuclear bomb.

In January of 1944 thousands of workers were gathered at atomic plants at Los Alamos, New Mexico; Hanford, Washington; and Oak Ridge, Tennessee—three satellites of the Manhattan Project, the national program to build the atomic bomb. Glenn Seaborg, the leader of the scientific team that had discovered plutonium, had devised a chemical process to separate it from spent fuel. Seaborg had distilled only the most minute quantities, whereas the Manhattan Project was starting to fabricate Pu-239 in bulk. Seaborg wrote,

It has occurred to me that the physiological hazards of working with plutonium and its compounds may be very great. Due to its alpha radiation and long life it may be that the permanent location in the body of even very small amounts, say one milligram or less, may be very harmful. . . . In addition to helping to set up safety measures in handling so as to prevent the occurrence of such accidents, I would like to suggest that a program to trace the course of plutonium in the body be initiated as soon as possible.

Seaborg had in mind the chilling precedent of the radium-dial workers. Starting at the time of the First World War young women were hired to paint the faces on timepieces. The workers

used a luminescent paint laced with the novel substance radium. They had the habit of licking their brushes to keep the points fine. Ten and twenty years later cancers of the jaw and sinus area were rampant among them.

What plutonium had in common with radium was the emission of alpha radiation. Alpha is now known to be the most hazardous kind of radiation, providing it can get into the body. The alpha particle is heavy, consisting of two protons and two neutrons. Unlike penetrating x-rays or gamma rays, alpha radiation can't do damage from the outside, because skin is enough to block it. Still, Seaborg and others worried that the furious pace of the Manhattan Project would inevitably lead to cases of internal contamination, whether through cuts or inadvertent swallowing or inhalation.

A lab at Berkeley began investigating the effects of plutonium on a small number of rats. The summary of results (titled simply "Product Studies," because even the name "plutonium" was classified) was issued in February of 1944, only a little more than a month after Seaborg's warning. Remarkably, this first snapshot of plutonium at work in the systems of animals—it applies to human beings as well—has been accurate for fifty years. "Oral absorption . . . is less than 0.05%; lung retention high; absorbed material predominantly in the skeleton. . . ."

Let us take the metabolic findings in turn. First, plutonium taken orally is hardly absorbed by the body at all; in small doses it passes right out through the digestive tract. When I learned this, I was reminded of two figures who have deliberately contravened popular notions about plutonium.

One is the health physicist and pro-nuclear-power activist Bernard Cohen, who is known for his long-standing offer to ingest pure plutonium if a nuclear-power critic will eat an equal quantity of pure caffeine. By Cohen's calculation, the risks of the two substances are equivalent. No one has taken him up on his offer.

The other is Mr. Pluto, the frisky hero of an educational cartoon shown in

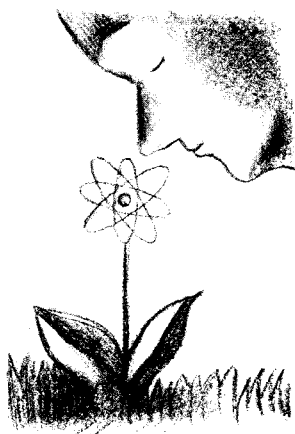
The cessation of atmospheric testing, beginning in the 1960s, closed off the public's primary source of exposure to plutonium

Japan. The Japanese use plutonium as fuel in experimental nuclear-power plants. To demonstrate that the risks generally associated with plutonium are exaggerated, a child drinks a solution of it without harm, while Mr. Pluto looks on approvingly.

The second finding of the Berkeley team, that of high retention in the lungs, was achieved by administering plutonium directly to the rodents' lungs. When exposed to air, plutonium oxidizes, much the way that rust forms on iron. When plutonium is milled or worked, the oxides of plutonium become airborne particles. On an immensely greater scale, as noted, a nuclear explosion spews out specks of plutonium oxide, which can penetrate the recesses of the lung if they are small enough. The critical size is a micron or less—that is, less than 0.00004 inch. Because the particles are not very soluble, the lung has a hard time clearing them.

The initial tests on rodents were ended before any lung damage could be tracked. After the war, researchers started using dogs for their inhalation experiments, because a long-lived animal would provide a better model, more germane to human beings, of the long-term consequences of alpha radiation. The results of the life-span studies on dogs did not coalesce until the 1970s; they indicated that micrograms of plutonium administered under laboratory conditions are sure to produce lung cancer in beagles. These results underlie the frequent assertion that a millionth of an ounce of plutonium will produce cancer in human beings. The assertion fails to note the leap across species.

The Manhattan Project personnel who worked closely with plutonium were warned to wear gloves and respirators. They were told to keep their hands away from their faces. Periodically their nostrils



were swabbed with filter paper to see whether any plutonium was getting in. Some was. Decades later, however, the incidence of lung cancer in one sample of these workers is no higher than that in the rest of American society.

The third finding from the pioneer study was that plutonium, if not stuck in the lungs or passed through the gut, tends to migrate to the skeleton. Injected into the bloodstreams of the test animals, plutonium showed itself to be a bone-seeker. The Manhattan Project researchers were quite alarmed to see this, because radium behaved the same way.

The coming of the war had spurred an analysis of the health effects of radium, because the Navy planned to produce radium-dial instruments. A government safety standard was set in 1941: people working with radium were allowed a "tolerance dose" of no more than one tenth of a microgram in their systems. The initial limit for plutonium, promulgated in 1944, was derived from the standard for radium. Since plutonium is less radioactive than radium, it was thought that plutonium would be less hazardous by the same factor, and so a higher threshold was set. After further experimentation, however, biologists learned that plutonium was not only more poisonous than radium but also a more potent carcinogen—fifteen times as carcinogenic in rodents. The maximum tolerance dose for plutonium workers had to be adjusted downward over the years.

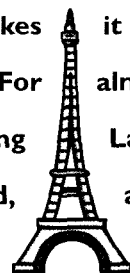
The war ended, yet the plutonium program continued to run at full tilt. To ensure that workers used respirators and followed safety precautions, staff physicians warned that plutonium was "the most toxic element known to man." They did not know this for certain, but did not want to have proof afterward. People today give instant credence to invisible toxic threats, but in that chipper era it was necessary to hector or scare workers into compliance. Similarly, when the Navy conducted tests in 1946 of the A-bomb's effects on ships, the overseeing physician called plutonium "the most poisonous chemical known"; even so, many sailors scoffed.

IT might well be asked, How was the plutonium burden for human beings determined? When someone was contaminated, no record existed of the amount that had gotten into the body; the subject, experiencing no symptoms, might

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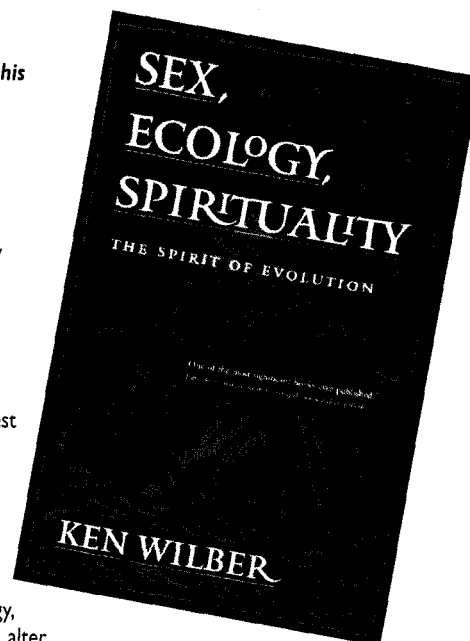
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not even have been aware of the contamination. For radioactive iodine, which collects in the thyroid gland and emits gamma rays, it was possible to take an external measurement by pressing a Geiger counter to a worker's throat. But just as the alpha particles from plutonium can't penetrate the body, they can't exit it either.

The solution was to analyze subjects' urine. Any plutonium voided by the body might be measured by an alpha counter. This meant solving another problem. Scientists had a good idea of how animals metabolized plutonium, because known doses could be related to the small daily fraction discharged in the urine. Did the same calculation apply to human beings?

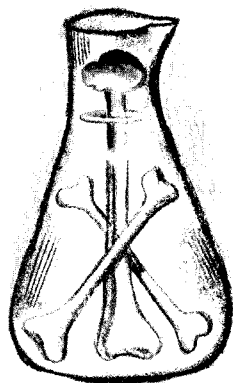
The need to find out—for the sake of the thousands who might be exposed—led to the notorious injection experiments. Eighteen hospital patients, all seriously ill, were given small doses of soluble plutonium, and their excreta were monitored for periods ranging from three weeks to four and a half months. The first test took place in April of 1945, a few months before plutonium was catastrophically administered to Nagasaki, and the last in July of 1947. It was soon clear that human beings voided plutonium in different measure from other creatures. A new formula had to be derived.

The injection study was invaluable to the health officials on the atomic reservations, because it enabled them to track occupational exposure by means of urinalysis. "Protection of all the workers in the Plutonium Project would have been immeasurably poorer without [the human test data]," the health physicist J. Newell Stannard wrote in his 1988 tome, *Radioactivity and Health*. He continued,

Yet, it is now clear that informed consent was honored more in the breach than in the performance. . . . When it became obvious that public scrutiny could no longer be prevented by keeping a security classification around the work, there was something of an uproar in the Washington offices that had inherited the problem from [the Manhattan Project]. . . .

Reports of the experiments had begun

to appear in the scientific literature in the 1970s. As it happened, five of the eighteen subjects were still alive in 1974. Perhaps because no ill effects of the plutonium had been observed, the government decided it was time the survivors were informed. In 1976 energy officials even put out a press release on the tests, which summarized the medical records without giving the patients' names.



"Like many crises agonized over in the anticipation," Stannard observed, "the response was remarkably mild." But that was hardly the end of it. The human-injection experiments would be revealed to the public on three more occasions—once in a 1980 special edition of the journal *Health Physics*, again in a 1986 congressional report, and finally in 1993 in *The*

Albuquerque Tribune. Each time, the public's outrage was greater. To be sure, the *Tribune* reporter, Eileen Welsome, dug up the names and histories of five of the unwitting subjects, which gave the outrage a personal dimension and earned Welsome a Pulitzer Prize.

AS the nuclear age matured, a divide began to widen between the professionals on the atomic reservations, who were tolerant and sometimes casual about working with radiation, and the public outside the walls, which was much less at risk but increasingly fearful.

At some of the weapons facilities a "respirator culture" developed, or so critics have charged, which forgave the sloppy handling of plutonium. The worst offender was the Rocky Flats plant in Colorado, where purified plutonium was milled and shaped into bomb cores. Workers in masks would cradle spheres of plutonium in their palms, feeling its slow heat. The workers might have been safe, but the way Rocky Flats was run caused gross contamination of the plant and its environment. Since halting the manufacture of bombs, the Department of Energy has reclassified most of its atomic reservations as environmental-restoration sites. The work force and bureaucracy are just as large as before, but the mission now is to put the Pu genie back into the bottle. Packed in barrels,

the plutonium-laced detritus of the Cold War is slated for burial in a salt mine in New Mexico, if the repository is ever permitted to open.

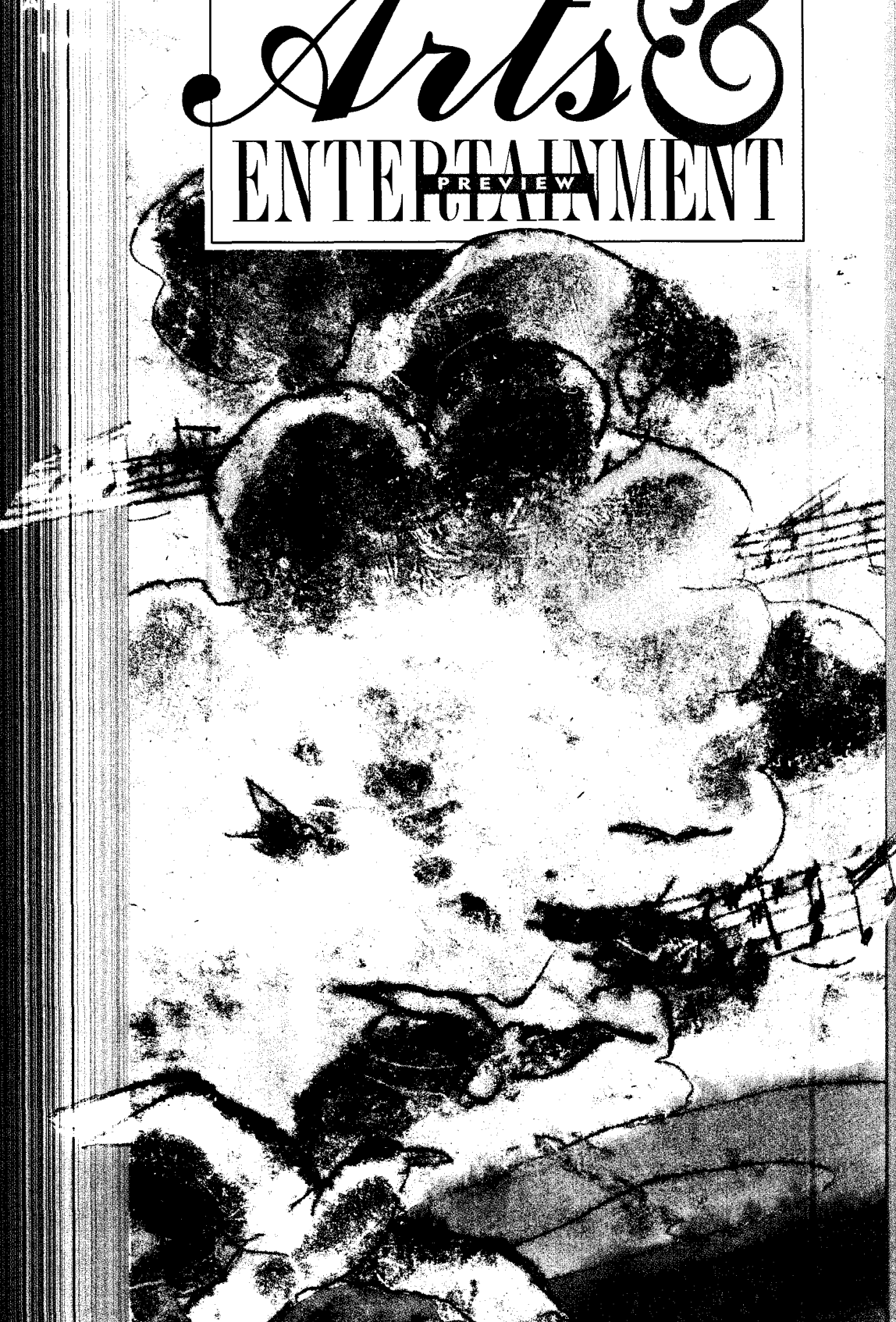
It is estimated that the air ducts at Rocky Flats hold enough material for seven bombs. Building 771 at the plant was recently judged the most hazardous plutonium site in the country. For years plutonium in the dust blew onto the outskirts of Denver. Two fires at the plant added to the releases. In 1992 a grand jury in Denver rebelled against a settlement between the federal government and the former contractor at Rocky Flats, Rockwell International. The incensed citizens of the jury tried—unsuccessfully—to indict both Department of Energy and Rockwell officials for flagrant environmental crimes.

Whether such crimes have damaged people's health is for epidemiology to determine. Since acute poisoning from plutonium, or indeed any immediate harm, has never been documented in human beings, researchers must look for slow-developing health effects in exposed populations. Accordingly, cancer deaths in both the downwind civilian population of Denver and the worker cohort at Rocky Flats have been examined.

A study of Denver-area residents published in 1981 appeared to show a higher than normal number of cancers among those who lived near the facility. A second study undercut this claim. It turned out that the first researcher had fudged the areas of plutonium concentration in the soil so as to work in a cluster of cancers. When the effect being sought is subtle, an epidemiological inquiry turns on the framing of the assumption (that living near plutonium causes cancer) and

(Continued on page 38)

*One physicist has
offered to ingest pure
plutonium if a nuclear-
power critic will
eat an equal quantity
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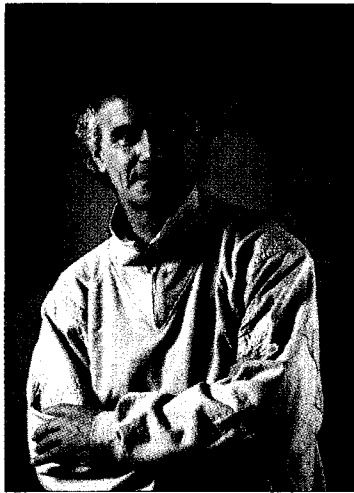
Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

NOTES FROM THE VASTY DEEP

Though a prophet be without honor in his own country, British musicians have been best loved in Britain. It was ever thus, and the paradigm still holds—not only for performers. Quite a number of today's British composers are culture heroes at home. Their by no means uniformly accessible scores resound through the flagship institutions, cheered by an avid public and embraced by a sympathetic press. Americans may recognize their names (British critics at top American publications have seen to that), but in this country even such leading names as Sir Michael Tippett, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Oliver Knussen, and George Benjamin rarely receive the tribute of a live performance.

The gaunt, ruggedly photogenic Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, aged sixty, probably the most prolific and revered of them all, is in pretty much the same boat. Known to admirers and familiars as Max, he dwells in the remote rusticity of the Orkney Islands, off the coast of Scotland. Candid newspaper shots show him tending waterfowl, but there is nothing quaint about his music, which is intricately constructed around medieval chants and alchemists' magic squares. Commentators say, to the point



Favorite Brit: Peter Maxwell Davies

of cliché, that the sea-swept landscape of the Orkneys haunts Davies's scores, even as the vastnesses of Scandinavia inform the music of Sibelius, to whom Davies is often compared. His twenty-five-minute Fifth Symphony, which had its premiere last year, gives an especially noble sample of his work. Characteristically arcane in its architecture, it holds the ear entranced with a sustained solemnity enlivened by glints of spare splendor. Particularly evocative in this abstract, spacious score are the late wind calls, launched into emptiness like the cries of gulls.

The BBC Philharmonic began a nineteen-city American tour last month, with the music director Yan Pascal Tortelier leading repertoire from Haydn and Beethoven to Mussorgsky, Ravel, and Britten; Davies is traveling along as composer-conductor in residence. Five of his major works are featured, including the brand-new *Beltane Fire*, which will receive its world premiere at Symphony Hall in Boston (April 3). And Max's fascinating Fifth will have its first American performance at Avery Fisher Hall as part of Lincoln Center's Great Performers series (April 9).

A SHOW OF HIS OWN

In three seasons as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic the precise yet vibrant Finnish maestro Esa-Pekka Salonen has unlocked the potential of a genuinely great ensemble, and he has done so the hard way: not by playing the classical Top 40 but by challenging his audiences with new sounds, lately including Lutoslawski's Fourth Symphony in its eloquent world premiere (recorded by Sony Classical). The casualty of Salonen's podium success, though, has been his career as a composer. A retrospective of his elegant work to date fits conveniently onto a single CD (Finlan-



Salonen conducting the LA Philharmonic

dia); but the word is that he has recently been canceling conducting engagements in order to fulfill a flurry of major commissions. Meanwhile, his Los Angeles constituency will get a sample of Salonen the composer with the U.S. premiere of *Mimo II*, bravely juxtaposed with Stravinsky, Mozart, and Beethoven, and showcasing the talents of the orchestra's principal oboe, Carolyn Hove (April 20-23; 213-850-2020).

SWEET SWAN SONG: AMELING WAVES A GRAND GOOD-BYE

Is it time? The announcement of Elly Ameling's current American dates bears the melancholy legend "Farewell Tour." The beloved Dutch soprano's schedule of recitals and public master classes began in Boulder, Philadelphia, and Québec. In April audiences at Lincoln Center will be privileged to hear her in two programs (all Schubert on April 2; Schumann, Wolf, Poulenc, and Mussorgsky on April 9), with a master class following on April 17. The Hartt School of Music (Hartford, Connecticut), the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, and the Cleveland Institute of Music are also on her itinerary this month. In July she will visit the Univer-

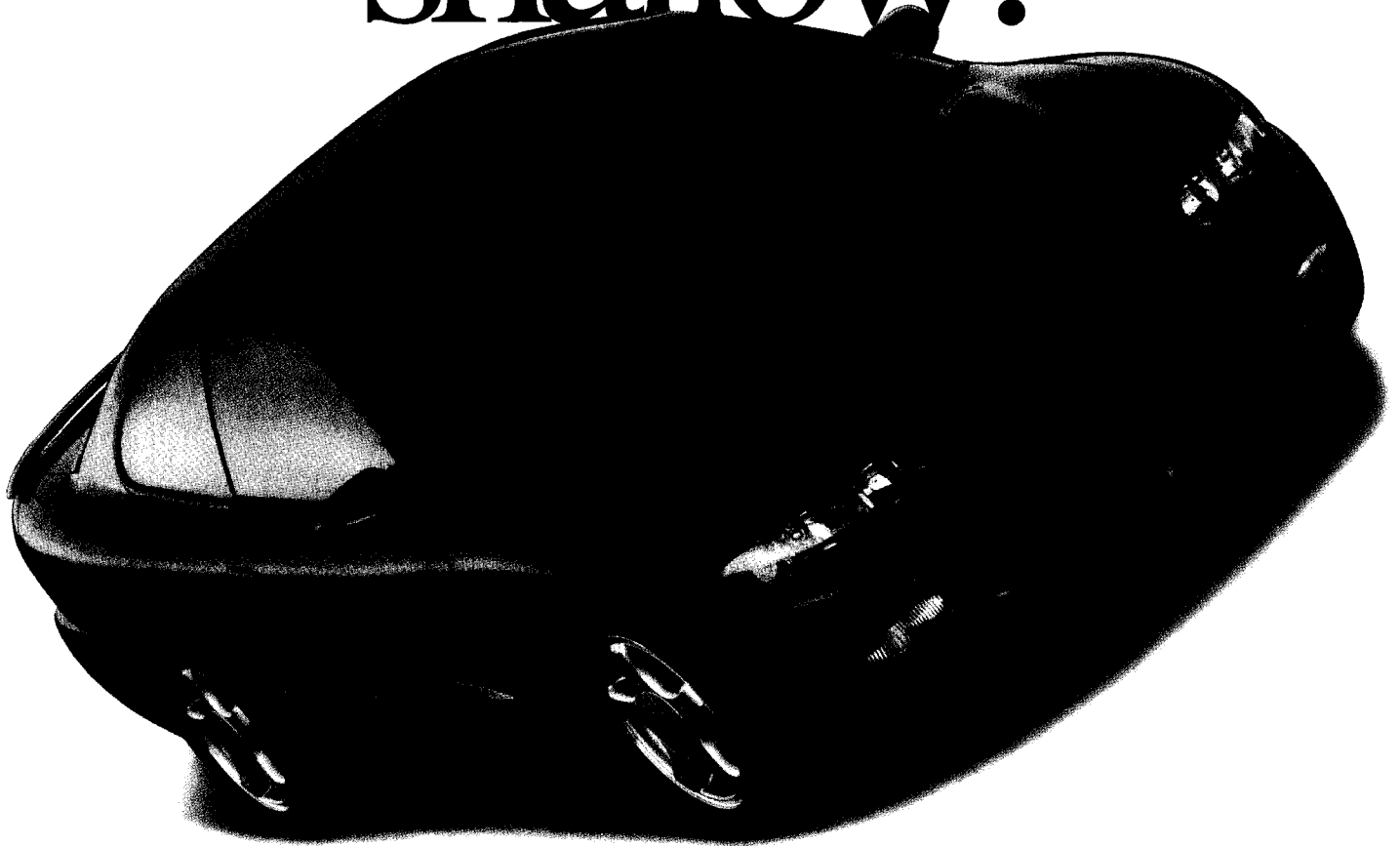


Dutch soprano Elly Ameling

sity of Maryland at College Park; stops on a final round in November are yet to be announced. Ameling's blooming tone, sly yet generous wit, and gracious spirit have lit up repertoire from Bach and Mozart to Satie and Gershwin; and her career has been well documented in a long and golden discography. If a single album had to memorialize Ameling's seraphic art, perhaps it would be the Philips Classics LP *German Romantic Songs*—alas, out of print, and not, as of this writing, reissued on CD (but keep your fingers crossed and your eyes open). Another option: the four-CD all-Schubert compilation *The Early Years*, also on Philips, in which the young singer's openness of heart rivals that of the heaven-descended composer himself.

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

Does wanting it
just for the looks
make you feel
shallow?



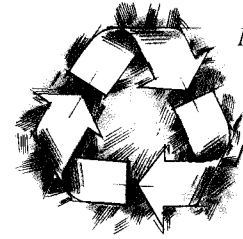


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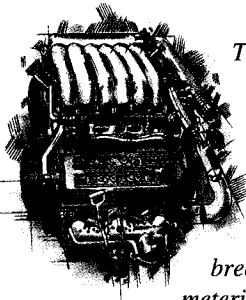
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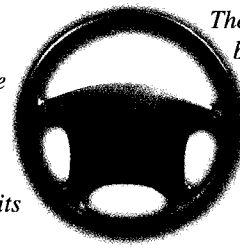


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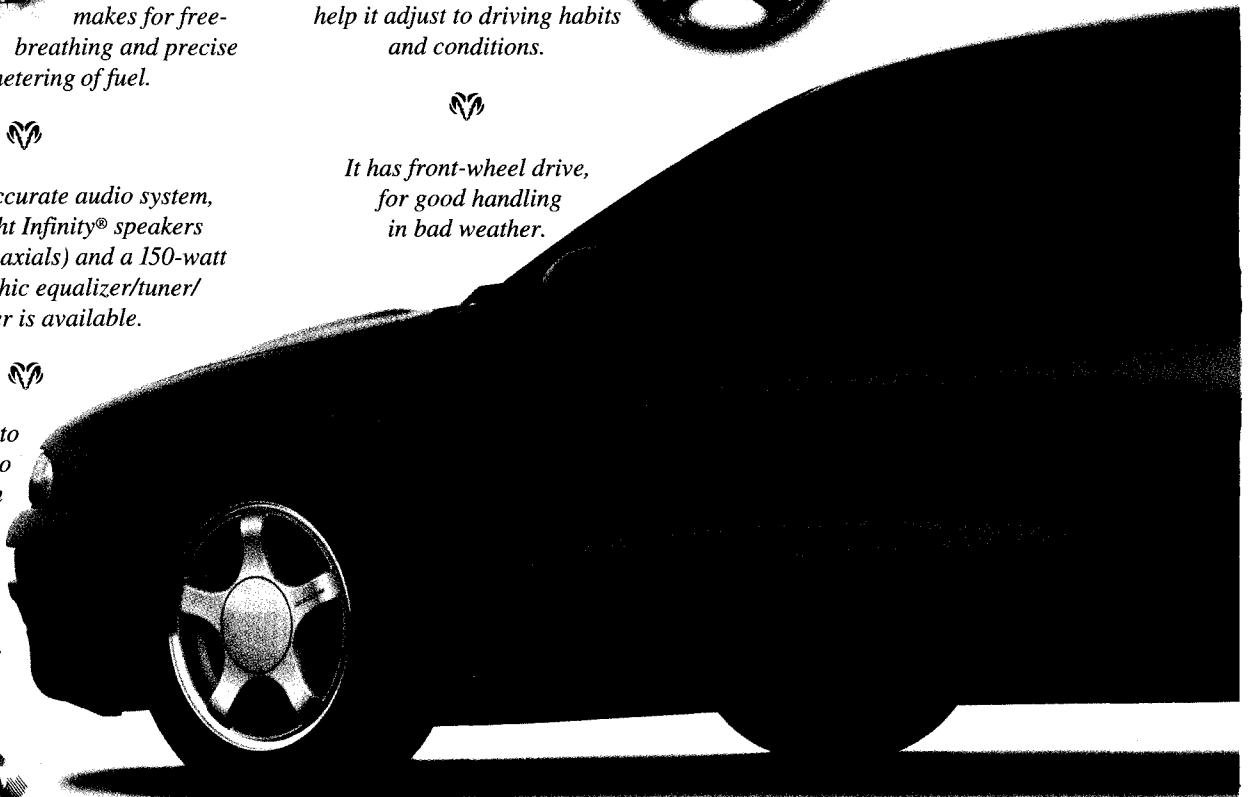
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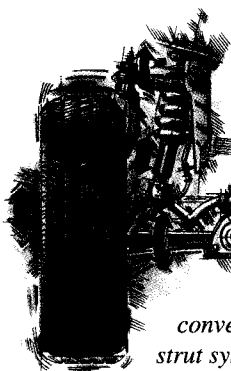
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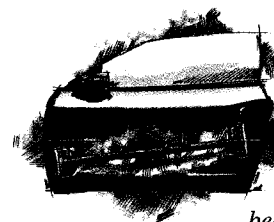


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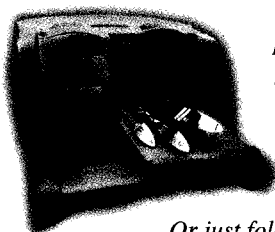
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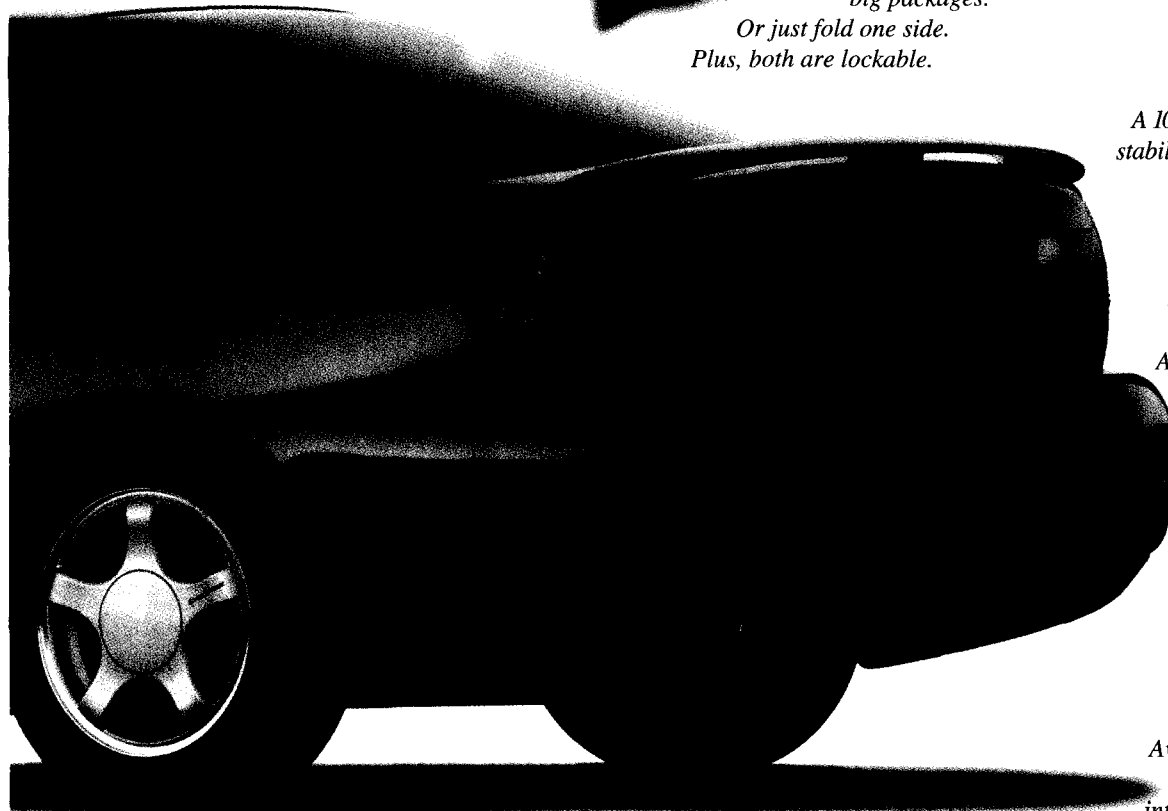
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Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND LAURA JACOBS

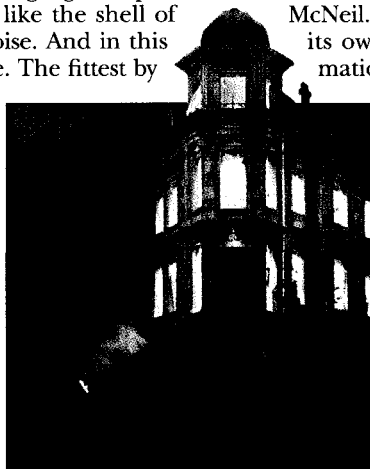
A BROADWAY SURVIVAL GUIDE

For an emblem of Darwinism in action, a theater lover might dock the *Beagle* on the Hudson and stroll over to the Great White Way, there to eye the mar-quees. A sign goes up, the lights go on, and then, sooner or later, the lights go out; a niche is empty. A new sign goes up—or the old one lingers, like the shell of some extinct land tortoise. And in this jungle the fittest survive. The fittest by what criterion? That is an everlasting imponderable, but perhaps a few of Broadway's hardy holdovers from 1994 will suggest some answers.

As countless sages have observed, *Show Boat* (1928) triumphs primarily because its score has a breadth and depth perhaps unique in musical comedy. But in Harold Prince the smash-hit revival has a director who can strip the gauze from nostalgia without hanging the barbed wire of cynicism in its place. In Susan Stroman it has a choreographer who can build steps and turns into numbers. And in Lonette McKee (who plays Julie and sings "Bill") it has a singing actress whose insight into



The men of Love! Valour! Compassion!



Ian McNeil's bleak house

blasted urban heath designed by Ian McNeil. The decor leads a life of its own, its baroque transformations riveting the attention where the playwright fails. Among newer entries, Andrew Lloyd Webber's rehash of the macabre film classic *Sunset Boulevard* owes more to the physical production—the swimming pool with floating corpse (touted by the critics), a cinematic car chase (mostly ignored)—than to music or lyrics or the dispiriting, by-the-numbers execution of either. Terrence McNally's new play *Love! Valour! Compassion!* gives audiences the properties named in its title, and also their opposites: hate, cowardice, and selfishness—in short, the spectrum of life as we know it, lived as many feel we live it today. Here, the play's the thing.

—A.B.

PARTNERS IN ARTS

The downsized 1990s have not been good to classical dance, a high art that burns dough the way it burns calories (toe shoes alone can cost half a million a year). The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, however, always a friend to ballet, has been especially devoted in this difficult decade. This month the Kennedy Center's Ballet Commissioning Project will premiere its seventh new work in two years: Lynne Taylor-Corbett's updated version of Grimm's *Twelve Dancing Princesses*, called *The Mystery of the Dancing Princesses*, for the Miami City Ballet (the Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., April 25–30). The project, a matching grant between the Kennedy Center and the National Endowment for the Arts (dollar ratio 3:1), has allowed six ballet companies to share six new works. So fiscally savvy was the Kennedy Center that not only did it eke out this seventh dance, but it is helping to fund three more new ballets, at American Ballet Theatre, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and the Joffrey. Talk about stretching a dollar! Asked to sum up the project's success so far, the director Sheldon Schwartz said, "It produced a masterpiece, Paul Taylor's



Boston Ballet dancers in *Breakers*

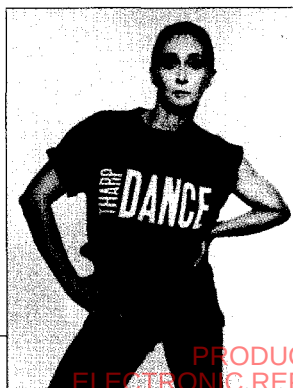
Company B, which all these companies were then able to perform affordably—precisely our purpose. And the participating companies are talking to each other on a regular basis." What about a downside? "I am disappointed that *Company B* is the only dance all the companies have taken into their repertoires. The point of the project is that we absorbed the financial risk to allow artistic experiment. I hoped the companies would try more of the new ballets—Merce Cunningham's *Breakers*, for instance—simply to challenge their dancers and their audiences." On to the Miami princesses.

—L.J.

TWYLA'S TRAVELS LONG AND STRANGE

These days Twyla Tharp's dances read like stops on a millennial expedition, each new dance with a different company her Swiftian entry into a mind-expanding journal. Last year's *Waterbaby Bagatelles*—made for Boston Ballet, which is reprising it March 23 to April 9 (call 617-695-6955)—might be the fluid blue space that the dancers from Tharp's apocalyptic *The Golden Section* break through to—the New Jerusalem! Mean-

while, May 1 will mark the return to a much-observed dance continent: American Ballet Theatre. The company will celebrate Tharp's thirty-year choreographic career with three premieres in one night at the Metropolitan Opera House. For information call 212-477-3030. —L.J.



Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

Laura Jacobs is editor in chief of Stagebill.

The incomparable Tharp

Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

THE NEXT NOIR THING

Just when you thought you'd had it with tongue-in-cheek homages to *film noir*, along comes another—and it's not half bad. In *Bulletproof Heart*, Anthony LaPaglia (Goofy and Grumpy rolled delightfully into one) plays Mick, a professional assassin so jaded that he feels nothing, not even the blandishments of a lubricious hooker who invites disaster by introducing a pair of scissors into their foreplay. Mostly he mopes around lobbing Camusian questions on the order of "What is the meaning of meaning?" at his bewildered boss (the adorable Peter Boyle), while

Rogers and LaPaglia in *Bulletproof Heart*

half-heartedly trying to train his enthusiastic klutz of an assistant (Matt Craven). Happily, French nihilism proves no match for Mimi Rogers as a seductive tootsie named Fiona who remains fully clothed for at least five minutes. Fiona is not in the pink of mental health, and for mysterious reasons she's eager to become Mick's next victim. At the drop of a black lace teddy, however, the hardened hit man goes all gooey, chivalrous love blossoms, and the plot thickens just enough to drop a surprise ending on you. First-time director Mark Malone understands that in the world-weary nineties we take our *film noir* heavy on the knowing grin and light on the melodrama. So although *Bulletproof Heart* has all the *noir* trimmings—doomed romance, glum lighting, sinister edge—it works best as a wigged-out black comedy and a genuinely affecting love story. Malone is a director to watch, but I'm wondering if there's a young male filmmaker out there who *doesn't* yearn to be Quentin Tarantino—or his successor.

Ella Taylor is a film critic for *Mirabella*.

THESE BOYS' LIVES THROUGH THESE BOYS' EYES

American filmmakers construct children as archetypes, sanctifying them as angelic victims, demonizing them in horror flicks, or turning them into cute little dancing bears. The French are more matter-of-fact: to them, children are short people with their own worldly cunning. Agnès Merlet's debut film, *Son of the Shark* (*Le fils du requin*), tells the story of two brothers (played with extraordinary poise by nonactors she found in a provincial school) who, abandoned by their mother and alternately abused and neglected by their drunken father, terrorize the inhabitants of their provincial town with random violence. The adults around them respond with a mixture of passivity, indulgence, and reactive punishment that confirms the boys' experience of a life without safety, comfort, or predictable boundaries. All they have is a fierce if ambiva-

*Son of the Shark's* authentic stars

lent loyalty to each other and a rich fantasy life about fish, drawn from a book about sharks left by their mother, which lends *Son of the Shark* its austere poetry. The point of view belongs to the boys, and the film never sentimentalizes them. Watching them, we are stranded between pity at the arbitrariness of their world and revulsion at the savagery of their revenge.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER...

Sustained by the memory of his now-dead wife dancing naked for him fifty years earlier, retired violinist Joseph Kopple (the estimable Armin Mueller-Stahl) measures his declining days by precise maintenance rituals: visiting his decrepit but lusty friend (Lionel Stander) in a nursing home; deflecting overtures from his neighbor (Maureen Stapleton); and keeping his Brooklyn studio in its accustomed genteel poverty. The dull calm of his life is rudely interrupted by Charlotte (Olivia d'Abo), a nubile young loser in leather who knocks on his door seeking refuge from an abusive boyfriend. Joseph takes her in, the pair forms one of those unlikely attachments that happen in movies, and Joseph's life speeds up for better and worse. Based on a novel by Richard Bausch, *The Last Good Time* is a small film in the best sense. Directed with tact by actor Bob Balaban, and with a well-oiled ensemble performance from the cast, the

film has a delicate touch with the fragile currents of affection and resentment that run between powerless people with only each other to depend on. The movie celebrates old age, but Balaban doesn't try to persuade you that tomorrow is the first day of anybody's life. He merely suggests that if you live with open eyes and heart, something interesting will happen, even at your eleventh hour.

DODGE

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*Last Good Time's* unlikely pair

(Continued from page 30)

the validity of its statistical proofs (that the cancers found are not random). Often it is a case of garbage in, garbage out. Here a truly analytical "case-control" study, which would look beyond cancer incidence and its proximity to the plant, has yet to be conducted.

For the Rocky Flats workers, the science has been more rigorous, but still has not got past elementary statistical associations. Researchers studied the records of 7,000 men who had worked at the plant between 1952 and 1979. The men with plutonium in their urine turned out to be healthier than the American populace overall; their death rate was much lower. Also they had fewer mortalities from bone and lung cancers, the two most anticipated types. Indeed, no bone cancers at all were found in the Rocky Flats group. Did this mean that handling pluto-

draw connections between plutonium and disease, but the picture was very sketchy because the number of cases was very small. The study also ignored alternative connections and explanations. It was not even known, for example, whether the lung-cancer victims were smokers. Epidemiology is not much help unless it controls for other factors besides exposure to the substance of concern.

THE person who probably knows the most about the biomedical character of plutonium is George Voelz, a specialist in occupational medicine at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Voelz was involved in the study of the Rocky Flats workers. He has also helped track plutonium levels in the general population, from the wisps of global fallout. The concentrations are much too low to be detected in urine, Voelz told me recently, but can be identified in postmortem analyses of tissues. Voelz's main interest has been monitoring twenty-six Manhattan Project workers who were contaminated with Pu-239. Although the sample size is too small to provide statistical certainty, this is the longest-running study of plutonium and human beings.

The subjects in the study were a special cohort even before they became contaminated. All men, they were science majors in college, and were thought to be highly motivated. On arriving at Los Alamos, in 1944, many of them were assigned to a team called the Recovery Group. The Recovery Group's task was to come along after other workers and chemically extract plutonium from beakers, floor tiles, counter tops, and waste liquids—Los Alamos could not afford to lose a speck of the precious new material. Although they wore respirators and changed clothes twice a day, many in the Recovery Group inhaled plutonium. Inhalation was the most common avenue of uptake at the lab, although a number of people did absorb plutonium through cuts, and one man, mouth agape, encountered plutonium as a result of a small explosion in front of his face. Afterward he was so hot that he could set off an ionization monitor across the room just by exhaling.

The study began in 1951, after the men had returned to civilian life. The twenty-six subjects manifested unusually high levels of plutonium. Every five years or so the subjects have been given physical

examinations. George Voelz did not launch the work but inherited it in the early 1970s.

The subjects were last examined in the early nineties. Seven had died: three of cancer, three of heart disease, and one in an automobile accident. This rate of mortality, when adjusted for the men's ages, was much lower than that for white males in general. "There should have been thirteen deaths if they were like the U.S. population," Voelz says. "Does the healthy-worker effect go on for forty years? It's kind of unbelievable."

The most interesting and suspicious finding in the group was a bone cancer, a rare sarcoma of the lower spine. Voelz said it was the first such cancer observed in a person with a significant exposure to plutonium. The tumor spread rapidly and the subject died within eighteen months of its discovery. If it was caused by plutonium, the disease had a forty-three-year latency.

Except for a subject who died of a heart attack, at thirty-six, and the one killed in an auto accident, at fifty-two, and a third man blinded by glaucoma, at forty-five, all the tainted workers made it into their sixties without undue health problems. The survivors are proud of their contributions to medical science, Voelz says. When they gather for their periodic examinations, they call themselves the UPPU Club, because plutonium still shows up in their urine. It will until they die.

A final note about Voelz: he examined Karen Silkwood a few days before her death. He confirmed that she had been contaminated with plutonium. Her dose was akin to the average level of his Manhattan Project group—and at that point the men had been excreting plutonium for thirty years. At the Silkwood trial, in 1979, Voelz testified to the health of his small study group. He was castigated by the plaintiff's attorney because he wouldn't agree that Silkwood was guaranteed to contract cancer.

George Voelz is semi-retired today. I asked him if fighting the tide of opinion about plutonium had made him bitter. "No," he replied, "but it's frustrating sometimes. My responsibility is to make my work accurate and make it accessible for research. I can't convey it to society. Someday water will seek its own level. I may not see that day." ☘

Voelz's main interest has been monitoring twenty-six Manhattan Project workers who were contaminated with Pu-239.

nium was salubrious? Not at all. Researchers are used to seeing the "healthy-worker" effect. Unless a substance in the workplace is markedly toxic, laborers tend to be healthier than the undifferentiated population.

A more meaningful comparison, made subsequently, was between those workers who had been internally contaminated with plutonium and those who had not. The researchers found the overall death rates from cancer to be roughly equivalent. Differences cropped up with respect to particular cancers, however. Three of the contaminated men died of lung cancer, two of prostate cancer, and two of blood-cell cancer, and the rate in each instance was higher than for the unexposed group. The unexposed group, for its part, had fatal liver and brain malignancies; the exposed group had none. The study



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The Indestructible Mr. Bone

*The full details of my meeting with "The
Man Who Cannot Be Hung"*

WHILE my partner and I were playing in Springfield, Illinois, not long ago, I visited the place where Abraham Lincoln lived for seventeen years and the Dana-Thomas house, the most complete of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie-style homes. But these landmarks are overshadowed in my recollection by

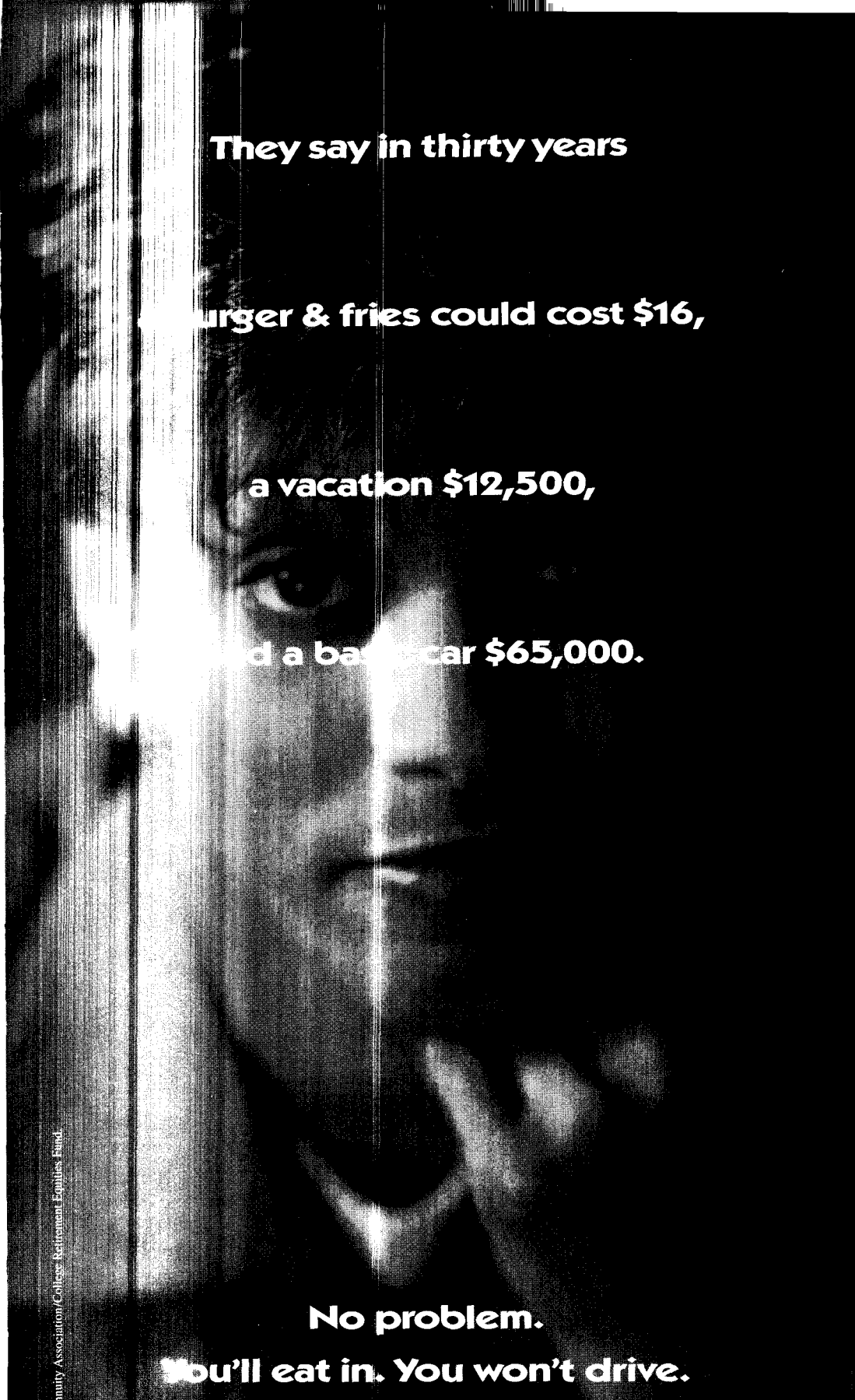
by **Teller**

the visit we received from Howard Bone. Bone is a sixty-nine-year-old carny who has been corresponding with me over the past year and who had sent me a copy of his colorful and uncommonly accurate book on the sideshow arts, *Hurry . . . Hurry . . . Hurry!* After due consideration he had determined that Penn and I

would be the right men to inherit his sideshow act, "The Man Who Cannot Be Hung." ("Hanged" may suit the law and the grammarians, but "Hung" is the correct diction for sideshow pitches.) He hitched a ride from Evansville with his devoted friends (and publishers) Mike, a pyrotechnician/clown/printer, and Carolyn, a respiratory therapist/editor.

Bone is bald and has tiny, translucent ears. When he bends his head forward to make a point, he looks rather like a cartoon vulture. He wore a rare (limited edition of four) American Museum of Magic T-shirt under his sport coat, and he brought me a signed color photograph of himself in an impressive martial-arts uniform. His voice is high and thin (he lost half his larynx in a stroke a few years ago), but he's remarkably fit and has the zest for living of a man who has come back from the dead.

Coming back from the dead is his occu-



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pation, as he demonstrated before our very eyes. He stood in the hallway outside our dressing rooms in the basement of the theater, took off his jacket (his arms are covered with faded blue tattoos), and brought out a twenty-foot length of hemp rope. Bone had a short and earnest chat with Danny (our truck driver) and Woody (our limo driver), explaining exactly what they were to do. He wrapped a small towel around his neck to prevent rope burn. Then he tied a single half-hitch in the center of the rope and looped it around his towel-wrapped neck. He placed his hands on his knees, took four concentrated, very serious, deep breaths, and then nodded. Danny and Woody wrapped the ends of the rope around their hands. After an excruciatingly long tug-of-war, with both

*Coming back
from the dead happens
to be Howard Bone's
occupation, as he
demonstrated before
our very eyes.*

men pulling as hard as they could on the rope around his throat, Bone turned purple and fell down. Carolyn, acting as his assistant, loosened the rope from his neck. Bone stood up and took a bow.

We all stood in the hall and applauded. I was videotaping and had to tuck the camera under my arm to applaud, so I suppose there will be a few seconds of armpit on the tape.

Bone then asked to speak to me privately for a few moments. "May I humbly beg your indulgence for a small favor?" he said, once we were alone in my dressing room. "Would you be so kind as to call me Howard?" I agreed, and he spent several minutes with me, imparting the secret of how to place the rope so as to avoid crushing the larynx.

I asked him how he had learned the act, and he told me he got it from the Monroe brothers, Jack and Preacher. They had told him to use it well, and to pass it on to someone worthy when he retired. He told

us we were his favorite performers and said that he was honored to present it to us. He eagerly asked whether I thought we would use it. I told him that it was a very cool act and we'd certainly think about it (and we are thinking about it)—though, as Penn pointed out, it might be nice to get our doctor friend who advises us on questions of life and death to double-check the position of that half-hitch.

AFTER the show I invited Howard and his friends to be my guests at a meal. Howard rode with me in the long white limousine. His friends followed in their car. "Well," he said, looking around at the interior, "another first for me."

Woody had arranged for an out-of-the-way Italian restaurant called Bianca's Supper Club to stay open late for our little party of four. We ate linguine, gnocchi, and sautéed mushrooms. Howard and his friends praised the flavor of the food and the generosity of the portions, and they told me stories.

I don't know if all the stories were literally true. Frankly, I don't care. When carnies recount their adventures, it's something higher than mere reportage. Here's what they told me.

During the Second World War, Howard was trained in Itto Ryu Jutsu, a form of martial arts that goes back to the ancient Servers, the dreaded Chinese assassins. Officially the Servers ceased to exist 500 years ago. But during wartime extreme measures are sometimes necessary . . .

After the war the lethal skills of a Server were not without use back at home in the States, on assignments too secret to be named, neutralizing bad guys. That was how Howard first encountered Mike, who also worked in covert operations. Mike traveled under cover of doing tech work for Holiday on Ice, but as soon as the show was set up in a new city, he was at liberty to carry out his secret assignments, principally "cleanup." He met Howard while "cleaning up" a scene in which Howard had dispatched four armed unsavory characters barehanded.

Mike was sent abroad only once, in 1967, when he was assigned to East Germany. He made it out alive by spending a week on a train disguised as a *fräulein*—an especially hazardous deception because Mike's plump figure suited only too well the tastes of the East German "chubby chasers."

As the evening unfolded, so did another story, one a little closer to home. A few years ago Howard had a heart attack and a stroke, which put him in a Veterans Administration hospital, where they were willing to treat his heart but, to his exasperation, not willing or able to correct the damage the stroke did to his voice. He became listless and depressed. Released from the hospital, he saw no reason to go on living. His friends Mike and Carolyn suggested that if he wrote a book about sideshow magic, it would be a very great service to history and to his fellow performers.

So he did. He described his version of the needle trick, of card tricks, of walking on flaming broken glass, of the Electric Girl. And in the closing chapter he detailed the workings of "The Man Who Cannot Be Hung" (except for the top-secret details he had imparted personally to me). I complimented him on the patter he gives for the act: an exciting story about resisting Axis torture during the Second World War. "That patter in the book," he said with an author's pride, "well, you know, I never used that. Nope. That story about the prisoner-of-war camp just came to me. A gift, sort of. It just came right out of nowhere. As you might say, an inspiration."

Carolyn edited the book. The two men figured that if she, completely inexperienced in magic, could follow the descriptions, then they would be clear to anybody. They carefully inserted both red WARNING paragraphs regarding the lethal nature of certain acts and illustrations with pun-filled captions.

When the book was published, they sold it through *Circus Report*. One reader wrote Howard, telling him he wanted to perform "The Man Who Cannot Be Hung" without the assistant specified in the text. Howard responded with a severe two-page admonition about the dangers of performing without an assistant in charge of safety. The wannabe hangee wrote back a full apology. Howard was gratified.

But eventually Howard tired of being a partner in publication, sold his interest in the book to Mike, and used the money to buy himself a bus trip to visit the American Museum of Magic. He gave Bob Lund, who owns the museum, the original manuscript of *Hurry . . . Hurry . . . Hurry!* along with photos and clippings from his career. Bob established a special niche in the collection for

Howard. Then Bob and his wife, Elaine, fêted Howard for two days, taking him out to eat and driving him over to the famous cemetery in Colon, Michigan, where Blackstone and other conjuring greats are buried. Howard beams when he tells about his visit to this legendary spot. It was, he says, one of the high points of his life. Bob introduced Howard to Dan Waldron, a columnist for *Circus Report*, who gave "The Man Who Cannot Be Hung" a nice plug in the magazine.

Mike and Carolyn enabled Howard to become an author, which reawakened his appetite for life. Bob Lund ensured his

LIKE any true cosmopolitan, Howard left us with a joke.

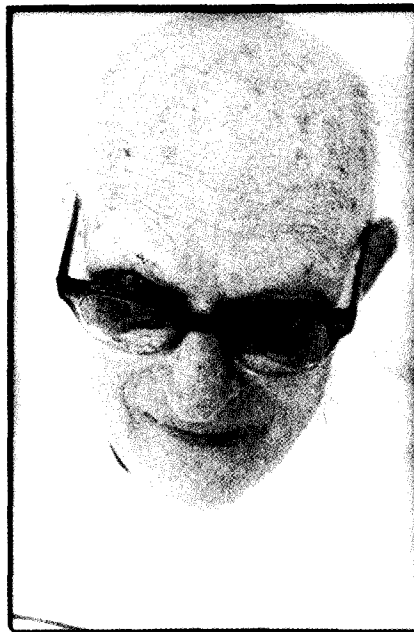
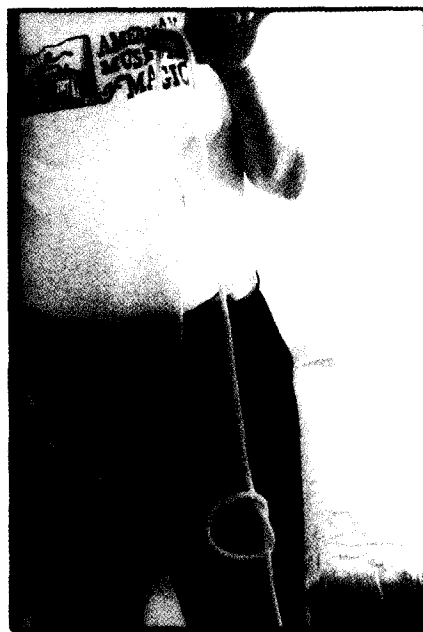
A carny gets to the gates of heaven. Saint Peter says, "Sorry, can't let you in. I don't want this place full of show people." So the carny says, "Don't worry, sir. If you let me in, I'll see to it that no other carnies ever bother you." So Peter okays it.

Now, the carny keeps an eye out, and whenever he notices another carny walking up the path toward heaven, he runs out and says, "Hey, you. I hear there's a red one in hell." "Red one" is carny talk for a town where fairs fare well. Well, the minute the carnies hear that, they turn

"That was just a little white lie, to keep the neighborhood up. No need to blame yourself."

"Blame myself? You got it wrong, Pete," the carny says, hurrying eagerly down the path toward hell. "I'm afraid I might have been telling the truth!"

AFTER one of our shows not long ago a young couple came up to me in the lobby of the theater and identified themselves as C. J. and Greg, friends of Howard Bone's. Greg said that he ran a martial-arts school where Howard has practiced.



place in history by putting him on record at the American Museum of Magic. And now, thanks to Dan Waldron's plug in *Circus Report*, he's contemplating a return to the stage. When I think about a man's having friends like these, I remember why I like the human race.

If you spot *Hurry . . . Hurry . . . Hurry!* on the shelf, you will notice it is written under the pen name Col. Don E. Kerr (*donniker* is carny slang for "toilet"). Howard has just finished a second book, *To Dance on Stage*, by "Jack Potts." I think it tells a lot about The Man Who Cannot Be Hung that in the heart of the introduction, as he takes the reader on an imaginary walk down the midway, this passage appears: "Some of the things I'll tell you about may actually have happened to me. Then again, they may not . . . Your choice, so try to keep an open mind as we walk, will you?"

Also in Bone's repertoire, a non-death-defying trick

right around and run straight to the inferno. And this goes on for decades: each time canvasmen come up the path, our hero runs out and says, "Howdy, brothers. I hear there's a red one in hell," and they all turn tail and head straight for the nether regions.

About a hundred years goes by. Then one afternoon Saint Peter is sitting by the gate when he notices our carny, carrying a suitcase and sneaking toward the door. "What are you doing, my boy?"

"Listen, boss," says the carny, shaking his head, "it was real nice of you to let me into heaven, but I'm afraid I just can't stand it. I tell all those carnies there's a red one in hell, and they all believe me and go down there, and not a single one of 'em ever makes it back." And with that he starts out the pearly gates.

"Now, now, son," Saint Peter says.

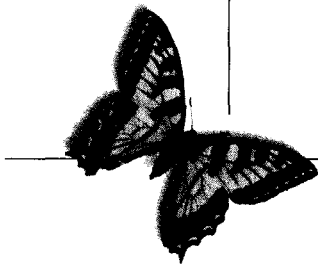
Although I had never questioned Howard's more dramatic autobiographical stories, I confess I had had trouble picturing the genteel, soft-spoken, pun-loving Howard as a lethal practitioner of Asian death sciences. So I asked Greg, rather tentatively, whether Howard was really a martial-arts buff.

"More than a buff," Greg replied, and he went on to elaborate. "He's a ninth-degree master of Itto Ryu Jutsu. I'm a professional instructor, and he tests *me* regularly. And—did you notice the tattoo on his leg? The yin-yang with the red center? I've been told that's the mark of the Server."

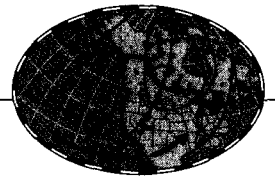
Now, as Howard might say, it may be, or it may not be. But at that moment the little hairs stood up on the back of my neck, and I felt like the carny in Howard's joke—afraid he might have been telling the truth. ☞

Which adds wind and dust to a mounting storm that then becomes a hurricane.

It's 10:15 in the Amazon, and a butterfly flaps its wings. Which creates a subtle breeze that spreads pollen throughout the air.

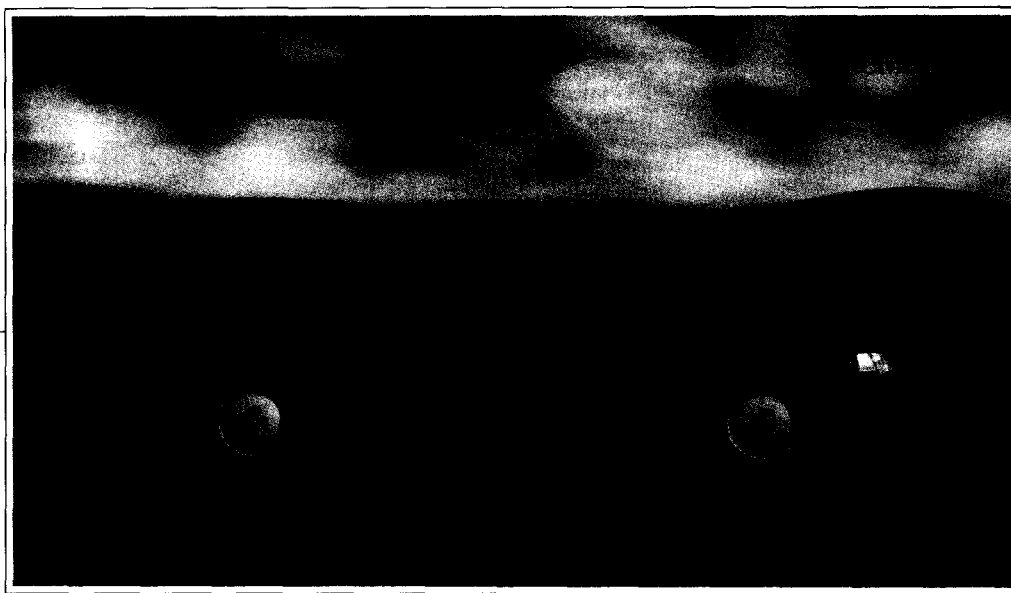


Causing a caribou to sneeze and send its massive herd into a stampede.



Which alters the global pattern of weather.

And creates a storm that knocks out
the electricity in your home.
So now you can't blow-dry your hair.



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Overselling Depression to the Old Folks

"Depression" in old age is often less a clinical disorder than a natural response to the predictable losses of the elderly

IN the calm quiet of my psychotherapy office a young man in a comfortable chair across from mine is struggling to be tolerant of his father's lifelong inadequacy. "He's seventy years old, for God's sake! What can I expect of him?"

"Whoa!" my mind says to me. "Does this guy know I'm

seventy? Probably not." And because he has not come to see me for consciousness-raising on the realities of old age, I quickly go back to attending to *his* issues.

by Stanley Jacobson

But my consciousness is being raised. In this year of my seventieth birthday my client is not alone in telling me that seventy equals ancient equals out of it. Social Security says that I now merit my pension no matter what my current earnings. I

am notified that my life insurance is canceled, as specified in the contract, "on the anniversary of the policy following the achievement of age 70." And a British auto-rental company says it will provide me with a car if I am

between the ages of twenty-one and seventy. No doubt about the message here—and no doubt more is to come.

How do I react? Once again, perhaps this time with greater intensity of focus, I confront the fact of my mortality. It is a monstrous boulder of an idea to get my mind around, the idea of ceasing to exist in this world. And the more I engage the monster, the more confident I am that working to come to terms with finitude is neither morbid nor eccentric but necessary to good mental health as we become old. My eyes and ears tell me it is an intellectual and emotional battle fought, in one way or another, by every older man and woman. And further, I am convinced that much so-called depression in later years is the consequence of being stuck in the struggle—silently, secretly, hopelessly—because our culture all but forbids serious discussion of death as the inevitable end of life.

Depression in older men and women is a hot topic in the world of mental health. The dominant mental-health experts say that too many older men and women are sad without reason—depressed and in need of professional help. If the elderly are not sad but make too much of minor ailments, or imagine disease when none can be found, the experts say they are depressed and need professional help. And if the elderly are not sad or hypochondriacal but have problems relating to appetite, sleep, or energy, the experts say they are *clinically* depressed and need professional help.

I say the experts are missing the point. Oldness itself is reason to be sad if you dwell on it, and it is in any event a matter of life and death to contend with. The remarkable fact is that most older people learn how to contain their oldness, and they are not depressed. Those who are slow to absorb the lesson can easily be confused and disheartened in a world that tells them they are losing their relevance and are likely to become a burden to family and society before they die, but not to worry, be happy. If they do worry, and look for help, they may well encounter a professional who is uncomfortable with the awesome incurability of oldness. Chances are he or she will dismiss their complaint with the casual observation



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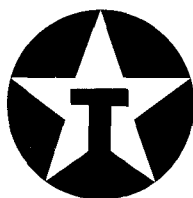
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"It's your age," or proceed directly from an unexplained physiological symptom to a cure-all pharmacological remedy.

Health professionals want to reduce the struggle of the old to an illness. They label it "depression," search for biological explanations of the "disease," and call the psychological, spiritual, and social aspects of the conflict mere "risk factors." Unfortunately, by colluding in the denial that the fact of our mortality is significant to our mental health in late life, they contribute more to the prevalence of depression than to its cure. Failure to credit the resilience and resourcefulness that successful aging requires (and that most people find within them) is a more significant public-health problem than late-life depression.

IN November of 1991 the National Institutes of Health convened a Consensus Development Conference on the Diagnosis and Treatment of Depression in Late Life. Hundreds of biomedical scientists, physicians, and mental-health practitioners and researchers gathered at the NIH Clinical Center Auditorium in Bethesda, Maryland, to listen for a day and a half to academic and technical presentations on the whys and wherefores of depression among the elderly—its prevalence, its causes, its consequences, its treatment. When the presentations and the question-and-answer periods ended, a panel of experts met to prepare a report, which reached its final form as a twenty-two-page consensus statement.

The report treats late life as one of a series of independent life stages, each with its own issues (the illnesses of the elderly being equivalent to the chicken pox and measles of early childhood) and unaffected by its relative position on the life line. In fact each stage is influenced by its inheritance of assets and liabilities from its forerunners. And old age is very different from all the others by virtue of being the last: it is the only stage that cannot be outlived, and it is the final opportunity to give definition to one's life, the last chance to do and be what one values. But the finality of old age was of no interest to the consensus conference. Not once in its twenty-two pages does the consensus statement acknowledge that awareness of the proximity of death may be a contributing factor in late-life depression.

To the authors of the statement, that

awareness is trivial, and life status, physical status, and mental status are discrete, separable processes. They may coexist, but they are not interdependent. The statement says,

Because of the many physical illnesses and social and economic problems of the elderly, individual health care providers often conclude that depression is a normal consequence of these problems, an attitude often shared by the patients themselves. All of these factors conspire to make *the illness* [depression] *underdiagnosed and, more importantly, undertreated* [emphasis added].

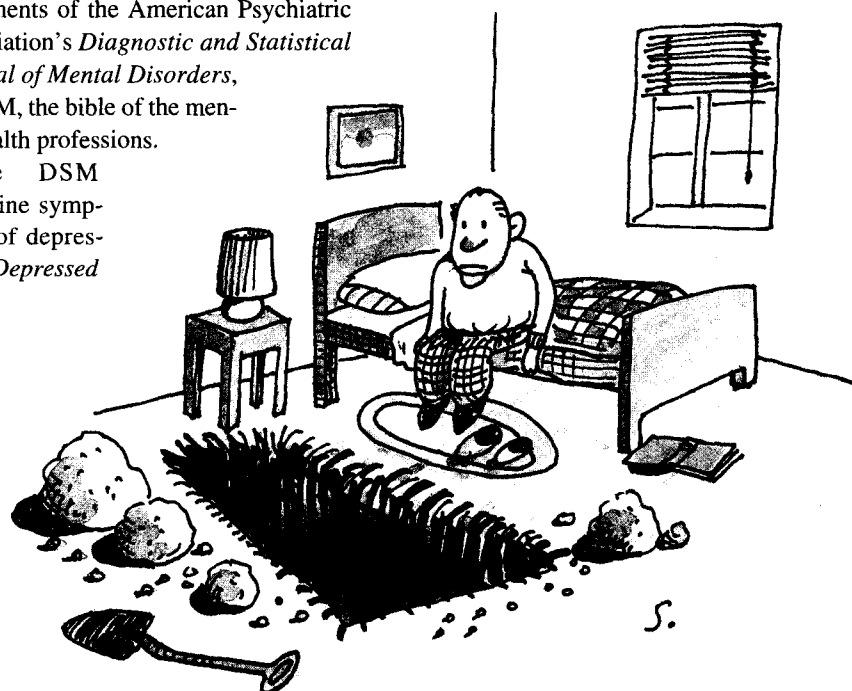
Having misguided themselves down this mechanistic road, the authors quickly find themselves in a land of medical technology, where neurochemistry, brain structures, and genetics have replaced the conscious experience of old age as the center of interest, and the travails of the human condition in late life have become risk factors for individual pathology. So strongly focused is the effort to medicalize depression in late life that the authors of the consensus statement offer a diagnosis of depression that misstates the requirements of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, or DSM, the bible of the mental-health professions.

The DSM lists nine symptoms of depression. *Depressed*

symptoms will do. Then it downgrades the two top-priority symptoms to positions five and six on the list. Now, the report would suggest, the major indicators of depression are the physiological symptoms: changes in appetite and weight, disturbed sleep, motor agitation or retardation, and fatigue and loss of energy.

Depression is thus all but divorced from the mind, converted to a discrete biological entity, a physical ailment as specific as high blood pressure or gallstones. The evidence for biological pre-eminence in depression is weak: "Despite an intensive search for biological and structural correlates of late life depression," the consensus statement concedes, "no specific diagnostic test can be recommended." Nonetheless, depression is to be considered a predominantly physical syndrome, thus calling for a physical remedy: "Depressed elderly people," the statement concludes, "should be treated vigorously with sufficient doses of antidepressants and for a sufficient length of time to maximize the likelihood of recovery."

If the experts had in mind only the fewer than three percent of the elderly



mood and loss of interest or pleasure are first and second on the list, and one or the other, this official guide says, must be among five symptoms occurring if a diagnosis of depression is to be validated. Without explanation, the consensus statement announces that any five of the nine

outside nursing homes who experience major depression, their proposal might prompt no argument. But the authors of the consensus statement want to apply their medical interpretation and their pharmacological treatment across the board, beyond the so-called clinically depressed to

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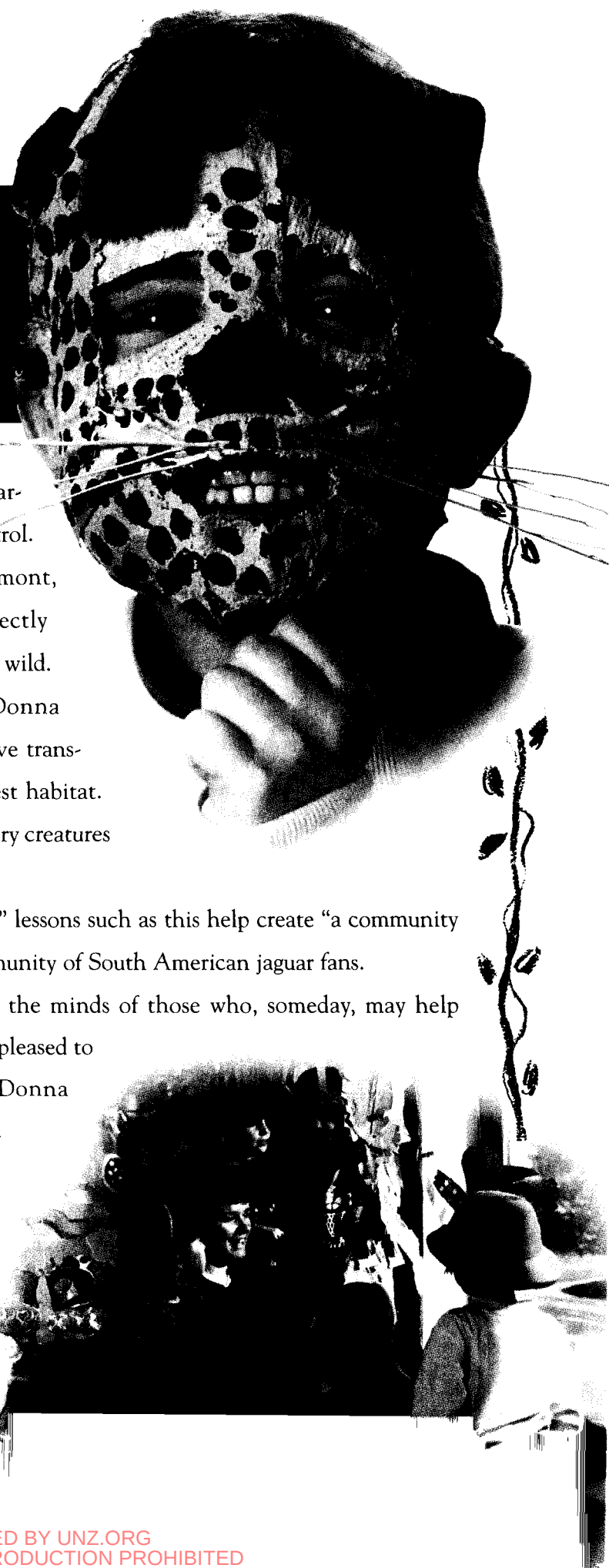
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those who are unhappy without apparent reason, the theory being that "these conditions negatively affect quality of life and are associated with increased risk of comorbid medical illnesses and clinical depression."

Curiously, one group is allowed to be more than briefly sad, even to meet the official criteria for a major depressive episode, without being said to have a discrete medical illness. They are the widowed, whose grief, according to the conference statement, may bring them to "experience varying degrees of depressive symptomatology." The statement goes on to say, "Most do not need formal treatment, but those who are moderately or severely dysphoric appear to benefit from self-help groups or various psychosocial treatments." In other words, the depressive reactions of the widowed are not *medically* significant to the same degree that the symptoms of other older men and women are. The reason? The cause of their distress, the death of a spouse, is clear, obvious, undeniable.

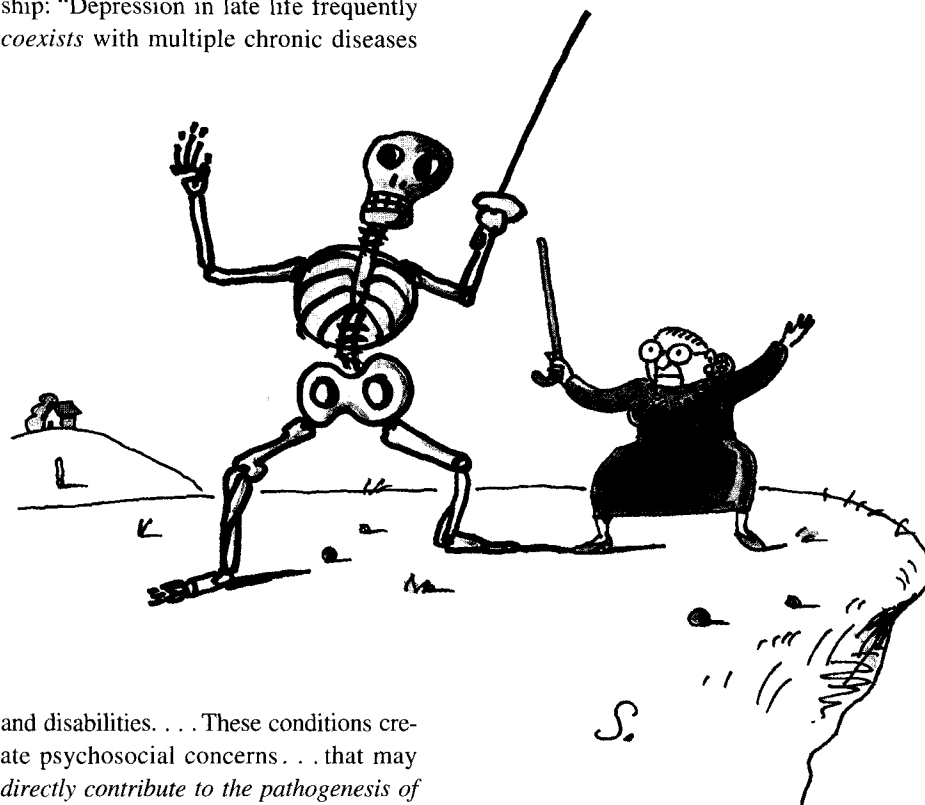
Not so the other losses of late life. Or if they are obvious, they are not thought worthy of an equivalent depressive reaction. Loss, real or merely sensed, has long been understood to be a major basis for depression, and the death of a spouse has been rated the most stressful loss one can experience. (The death of a child is probably more stressful, but it is perhaps too nearly unthinkable, and fortunately too rare, to be in the consciousness of people asked to rate life's stressful events.) But the death of a spouse is only one round in what may be a barrage of losses in late life.

The high rate of depression among nursing-home residents is surely related to the mere fact of their being nursing-home residents, immersed in infirmity and impending death. And the fear of imminent loss must surely travel with an elderly patient to surgery or intensive care.

The connectedness of health and longevity gives physical illness and disability a psychological, spiritual potency in our later years. It is therefore not surprising that research reveals a close association between serious illness and depression, especially among the elderly. The experts take note of this important concurrence: "The hallmark of depression in older people is its comorbidity with medical illness," the consensus statement tells us. But the *relationship* between the two, the

intimate presence in the equation of an anticipation of loss—loss of fitness, of autonomy, of life—almost entirely escapes them. "Concurrent medical conditions are frequently present in elderly persons," the statement says, "and should not preclude a diagnosis of depression." And, at another point, there is only a hint of this relationship: "Depression in late life frequently *coexists* with multiple chronic diseases

ties, the imminence of death would seem to be reasons enough to explain this phenomenon. But epidemiologists, using standard cut-offs on screening instruments, usually find no increase in the prevalence of depression [in the elderly].



and disabilities. . . . These conditions create psychosocial concerns. . . . that may *directly contribute to the pathogenesis of depressive symptoms as well as complicate treatment*" [emphasis added].

Perhaps the experts need to be reminded that we are body *and* mind. Any and all threat of loss in late life may violate the balance of the system, shock the mind into awareness of the tenuousness of life, challenge the capacity to adapt to an essentially unwelcome reality, and lead to thoughts and feelings that appear, out of context, to be pathological, though they are as natural as being fearful of an approaching tornado.

THE research psychologists Paul T. Costa Jr. and Robert R. McCrea, whose work was presented to the consensus conference but was ignored in the final statement, seem to understand the difference between reacting to the hazards of old age and succumbing to a disease. They write,

It is widely believed that depression is widespread among the elderly. The loss of friends and spouse, the presence of physical illnesses and disabili-

To Costa and McCrea, a depressive reaction to life experience is one thing, and vulnerability to a diagnosable disease called depression is another. They look at depression as a personality trait, a tendency to experience depressive feelings which varies in strength from person to person. The disposition itself is not pathological but a normally distributed, stable personality trait that neither increases nor declines with age. If the trait is strong in one's youth, it is likely to be strong in one's old age; if it is weak in the early years, it will be weak also in the later ones. Logically, therefore, a depressive reaction may thrive in the medium of a depressive personality and grow into a diagnosable depression. But a depressive reaction does not necessarily prefigure a depressive disorder in everyone. Nor are the elderly more vulnerable to depression, owing to age alone, than younger men and women. Late-life depression, as conceived by the experts, may not, therefore, be a widespread problem requiring a nationwide professional alert.

Costa and McCrea conclude that "conceptualizing depression as a discrete psychiatric disorder obscures its relation to normal variations in personality." This conceptualization also obscures the psychological significance of the phenomena of late life. When psychiatry reduces depression to biology, it addresses only the brain and ignores the mind and its consciousness of our mortality.

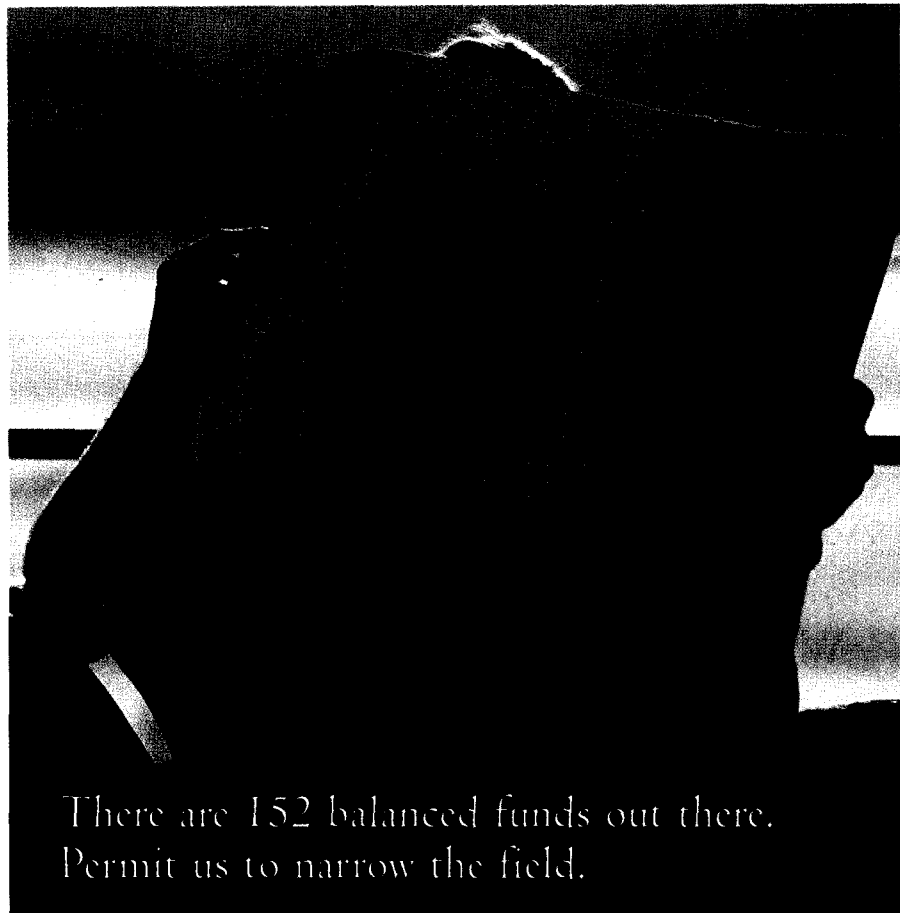
My mind tells me that we cannot both love life and be indifferent to dying. We cannot witness the decline and mourn the death of our parents, of the popular idols of our youth, of friends and colleagues, yet remain oblivious of the fact of our own mortality. The dwindling of our life expectancy cannot conceivably be irrelevant to our state of mind as we become old. And our consciousness of the saddening vicissitudes of late life does not presage a fall into a medically significant depression.

If we mourn our decline toward death, or, fearing it, overreact to an illness, perhaps our first need is simple, compassionate acceptance of the reality of our plight. If we resist admitting to unhappiness, as many older men and women are said to do, perhaps that is because the mood will be mistaken for pathology, and we will find ourselves in the hands of a clinician who, defining the reaction as "a depression" and the depression as medical, will prescribe the pills recommended in the consensus statement.

As for me, I intend to continue to process thoughts about my mortality as they come to me, and to prepare, more or less, as normal people do, for the end of life. But only as a sideline. Mainly I intend to obey the admonition of Simone de Beauvoir:

There is only one solution if old age is not to be an absurd parody of our former life, and that is to go on pursuing ends that give our existence a meaning—devotion to individuals, to groups or to causes, social, political, intellectual or creative work. In spite of the moralists' opinion to the contrary, in old age we should wish still to have passions strong enough to prevent us turning in upon ourselves.

If I feel in danger of losing my moorings, I will read a book, talk to a friend, find a group of peers whose concerns are like my own. And I will not yield to the professionals' insistence that my being sad about being old is a disease. ☼



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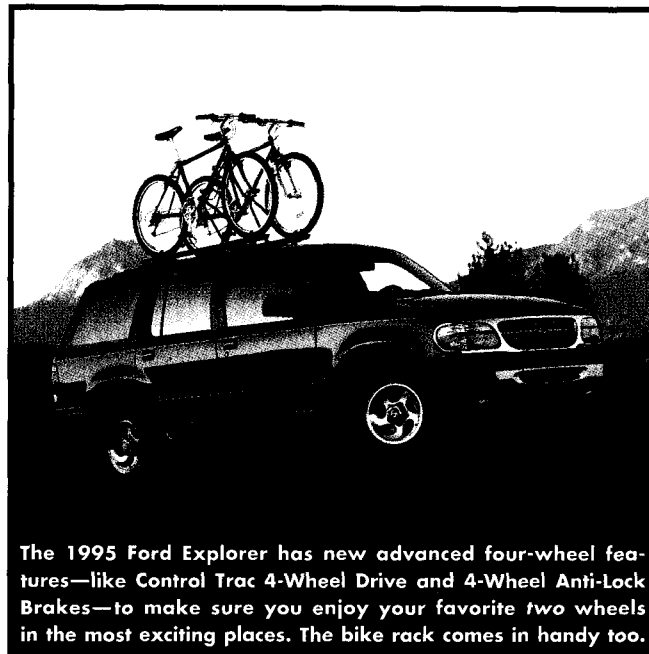
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The Mount Shasta course lives up to the name "classic." It has all a serious mountain biker could desire: beautiful mountain scenery; tight, wooded trails; elevations ranging from 600 to 3,200 feet; and the famed Lemurian Chute, a 3.5-mile downhill slope covering terrain that is often treacherous. Riders on the chute have been known to reach speeds of 40 m.p.h.—with the brakes on. Drawing more than 500 competitors a year, this race usually attracts 40 to 50 professionals. For the truly dedicated there's an Ironman class that features the bike race on Saturday and a motorcycle race on Sunday. For information call 916-243-0749.

Fat Tire Bike Week
June 26-July 2
Crested Butte, Colorado

Mountain biking's oldest festival began in 1976, when a hardy band of Crested Butte locals went for a ride to Aspen via the 12,700-foot Pearl Pass—on one-speed bikes. That epic journey has developed into a weeklong celebration of mountain biking ranging from fun races and recreational rides to top-level competitions. This year will feature a mountain-bike rodeo, guided tours of the backcountry, and a 2,000-foot vertical-drop downhill race. A circuit course on Saturday and a cross-country trek on Sunday bring the festival to a close. Between rides and races visitors can tour the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame & Museum, open daily throughout the week. For information call 800-545-4505.

24 Hours of Canaan
June 3-4
Canaan Valley, West Virginia

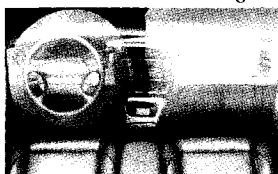
Now in its fourth year, and touted as the largest gathering of mountain bikers in the eastern United States, this event is quickly becoming one of the sport's most popular events. A 24-hour relay, modeled on the LeMans auto race, the race features four- or five-person teams competing on an 11.6-mile course. The race even begins with a LeMans-style mad dash to the starting line. Organizers expect that this year's turnout will exceed last year's 97 national and international teams. For spectators there will be guided rides to scenic viewing spots, a nighttime ride, and a 24-minute race for youngsters. For information call 304-259-5533.



Ford is proud to sponsor *Ocean Planet*, a significant new environmental exhibition designed to advance the understanding and conservation of the earth's oceans. Opening on April 22 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, this state-of-the-art multimedia program will visit eleven cities in the course of a five-year nationwide tour. For more information call 202-357-4797.



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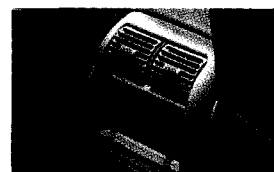
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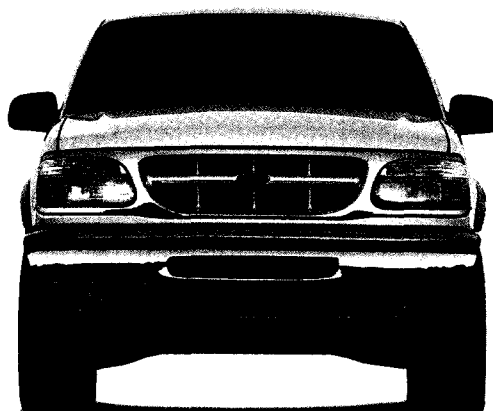
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Links With History

*Courses designed by
Donald Ross put golfers in touch with a
more philosophical era*

A WELL-DESIGNED first tee is a small green shrine to possibility, encouraging a golfer to forget, momentarily, the sliced drives, hooked drives, dribbled drives, and outright misses that blot his past. The first tee at The Panorama Golf Course, in Dixville Notch, New Hampshire, engenders just such optimism. Standing there, gazing down a line of golden tamarack trees that help define the left edge of a broad fairway, I thought a good drive might even make it to another country, because the low green hills in the distance are in Quebec. At least, I imagined that the course architect, a Scot named Donald Ross, wanted golfers to feel that sense of possibility.

I had come to the White Mountains to play on a Ross course because my golf game was suffering a certain enervation, brought on, I thought, by modern design. The past half century has not been kind to several art forms, including the letter, the

symphony, and the golf course. The archetypal modern golf hole is the par-three seventeenth at the Stadium course of the Tournament Players Club, in Florida. Its green is an artificial island, enclosed by railroad-tie bulkheads. It looks spectacular on television, but the hole is starkly Manichaean. A tee shot either hits the green or is lost. Divers pull at least 50,000 balls from the lake there each year; the fluid in it might as well be spilt bile. Yet the hole is fashionable.

The proliferation of such holes has given rise to an inevitable reaction, in the form of a growing admiration for the work of Donald Ross. In 1891, at the age of nineteen, Ross left the little Scottish town of Dornoch for St. Andrews, where he apprenticed in club-making, greenskeeping, and course design with Old Tom Morris, the British Open champion of 1861, 1862, 1864, and 1867. In terms of golfing lineage, this was akin to an actor's

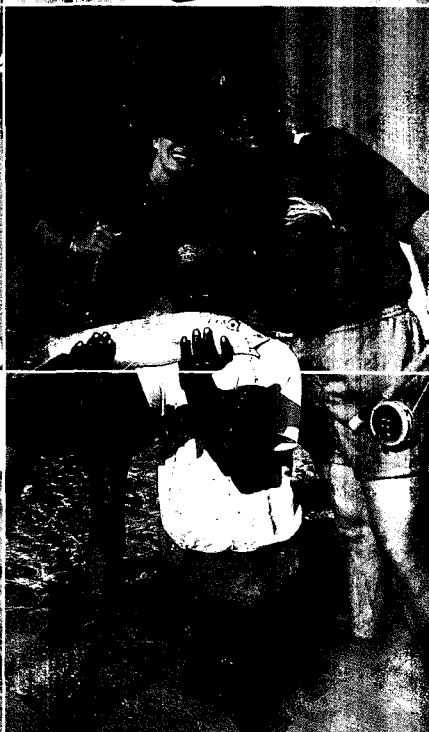
going to Moscow to learn the Method from Stanislavsky. Ross came to America in 1899, and took a job as greenskeeper and head pro at a club outside Boston. There he became acquainted with the Tufts family, who were developing a new winter resort at Pinehurst, North Carolina. Pinehurst became a showcase for Ross's design talents, which were soon in great demand. Before his death, in 1948, Ross designed more than 400 courses.

His layouts earned a reputation for being everything that modern courses are not. Few people can describe them without using the words "subtle" and "nuanced," and I thought that playing several of them might cure my malaise.

But finding accessible Ross courses is not easy. Suburbanization has obliterated many of them. Most of the courses that remain belong to private clubs. Even some at clubs—Rochester's Oak Hill, the site of this year's Ryder Cup matches, for example—have been remodeled so much that, like a dowager after a third face-lift, they bear only a faint resemblance to the original. But with the help of the Donald Ross Society, a group of golfers dedicated to preserving Ross's work, I was able to compile a list of six courses that are open to the public, that are still largely as Ross left them, and that I could play on a two-week vacation.

*The view from The Panorama
Golf Course's fifteenth tee*

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THE public Ross courses were built in the first quarter of this century for grand hotels that thrived in an era when the gentry of urban America decamped by railroad to a resort for an entire season. Those hotels that have survived the era of jets and fast food are delightful anachronisms, with wide verandas, clapboard walls, and shuttered windows. Inside, gentlemen wear jackets and ties to dinner, there seem to be two or three staff members for every guest, and the dining-room pianists know everything that Cole Porter ever wrote. Outdoors, activities range from tennis to lawn bowling. These surroundings can't erase the pain of a bad round, but they can ease the guilt vacationing golfers sometimes feel at abandoning the nongolfers in their party while they play.

The Panorama Course, owned by The Balsams Grand Resort Hotel (800-255-0600), is deep into New Hampshire's north woods; roadside signs warn motorists to watch out for moose. But it was not far enough north for my drive to encroach on Canadian airspace. In fact, after a weak shot off the heel of my three-wood, I was still 170 yards and one pond away from the first green. The pond gave me a second hint about Ross's design philosophy. A full forty yards of fairway lie between it and the green; thus only a wretched approach shot would find it. This is not to say the hole is easy. Putts on its green seem to break uphill. But its difficulties are graduated.

On the fourth tee my partner, a Balsams staff member who plays the course often, showed me something else about Ross's designs. "This is one of my favorite holes," he said. "It gives you choices." On the right side of the fourth, a 363-yard par four, ran a row of white out-of-bounds stakes. The left side seemed wide open if the golfer could carry a knoll about 170 yards out, and I aimed that way. But when I got to my drive, I found that the left side was no bargain. I had a downhill lie, and my approach would have to carry a large sand trap. "If you had played right, you'd have a level lie and an open approach," my partner said. Many of Ross's best holes offer similarly measured allocations of risk and reward.

Ross also employed optical illusions, as I discovered the next day. A half day's drive south through the New England countryside gave me a chance to buy a year's supply of maple syrup before I ar-

rived at the Sagamore (800-358-3585), on the shores of Lake George, New York. This is the sort of hotel Nick Carraway might have visited had he tired of Long Island. In the clubhouse grill there is a picture of a very young Richard Nixon, pants hitched up around his armpits (Nixon never could look casual), teeing off with Thomas E. Dewey.

A golfer surveying the Sagamore's first hole sees two swaths of green fairway, mowed in a checkerboard pattern, the first dropping precipitously down and the second rising to a hilltop green, with the blue lake in the distance. Ross further distinguished the hole by his placement of the sand traps, setting them about fifteen yards forward of the green, in flanking positions. To a golfer standing below, the traps make the hole look shorter than it really is, since the customary placement of flanking traps is even with the hole.

This little trompe l'oeil still works, according to Tom Smack, the Sagamore's aptly named director of golf. "Tom Kite, the 1992 U.S. Open champion, was here a while ago and played that hole with me," Smack told me. "He hit a three-wood down into the fairway. I knew he needed a six-iron for the next shot, but he was sure he could make it with a seven. His seven-iron just made the front edge. Then he dropped a practice ball and hit a six to the middle of the green. But he still found it hard to believe he needed that much club."

I had analogous problems: I needed a four-wood for my approach, hooked it, and hit my pitching wedge a little short of the green. The Sagamore dispelled any notion that Ross courses are too short or too easy for modern clubs and balls. Its par fours required plenty of long-iron approach shots, and I was laboring that day with a shank, sending shots skittering to the right. I couldn't break 100.

My next stop, I thought, would at least be inexpensive. Shennecossett, in Groton, Connecticut, was also built by the owners of a luxury hotel. The hotel long ago went under, and the town of Groton bought the course in 1968. My greens fee was only \$22. (Potential visitors can call 800-863-6569 for information about lodgings in the Groton area.)

Shennecossett turned out to be the most Scottish of the Ross courses on my list. Like St. Andrews, it is part of the town. A road cuts through the course, and players have to wait for cars and joggers to pass

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Above, The Balsams; below, Pinehurst's clubhouse and putting green

before driving off the first and thirteenth tees. The approach to the second green must clear a railroad track. Shennecossett, like Scottish links, is almost treeless, so the demarcation between holes is not as distinct as on typical American courses. Most important, like St. Andrews, Shennecossett is within sight of the sea. When the wind blows stiffly off Long Island Sound, it can lengthen a routine par four into a tough par five.

I walked out onto the practice green and shook hands with an affable, bearded man who was going out at the same time. This fellow will remain nameless here, because he was taking an unofficial leave that afternoon from his job at a local factory. He had, he told me, once been able to get around Shennecossett in fewer than eighty strokes. But now he and his wife had two children, and he coached their baseball and soccer teams, and he rarely got a chance to play. His swing had degenerated into a swiping cut across the ball, producing a slice that was accentuated by the wind. But he was able to play. No matter where on the course the wind blew him, he could find his ball and swing at it again. Since golf in Scotland is a less class-conscious game than it is here, I thought that Ross might have been pleased to know that Shennecossett survives to provide afternoons in the sun to all comers.

IT was time for North Carolina and Pinehurst, where I had a date to play with a man who had known Ross—John Derr, the retired director of sports for the CBS television network. Derr suggested that we play at Mid Pines, a beautiful design, lined with trees, created in 1921 on a dramatically undulating piece of land. Mid Pines is not the best known of Ross's courses in the Pinehurst area, but among those golfers who live nearby it is a fa-

vorite—less expensive and less crowded than its more celebrated brethren.

"One word you should never use when describing Ross designs is 'never,'" Derr observed after I watched one of my rare long, straight drives bounce into a small pond that encroached on the right side of the fairway at Mid Pines's third hole. "You thought Ross never put a water hazard into play like that, but he sometimes did. On this hole he probably thought you should tee off with an iron or a fairway wood."

Derr recalled Ross as a heavyset, short, and formal man who wore a wool jacket and a tie even in the heat of June. One day in 1935, when Derr was a young sports-writer, he met Ross and they walked Pinehurst's famed No. 2 course together, with Ross explaining the concept behind each hole. Ross described the first hole to Derr as a series of strategic alternatives. A golfer who placed his drive in the fairway could choose to shade his approach to the seemingly safer right side of the elevated green, where there were no traps. If he missed, though, his ball would land in one of a series of grassy hollows and pockets, leaving him with a pitch up to a green that sloped away from him. The recovery from the trap on the left was in fact easier, because the golfer pitched into the slope and the ball would generally stop somewhere on the putting surface. "He felt he could make a grass bunker more penal than sand," Derr said.

That Ross succeeded was evident the next day, when I played No. 2. One of my partners, chipping toward the first pin from the right side, felt as if he were trying to get the ball to stop atop a pedestal; it rolled off the green entirely. I chipped from the left side and managed to get up and down.

Pinehurst No. 2, where the U.S. Open will be played in 1999, is generally considered Ross's masterpiece. He began it in 1901 and tinkered with it almost until his death. It is open to play by guests of the Pinehurst Hotel (800-487-4653), an enormous white frame building with a red cupola. The hotel is the hub of an emerald wheel that encompasses seven golf courses, tennis, lawn bowling, and croquet.

For a championship course, No. 2 is remarkably hospitable to the average golfer. The fairways are wide and lightly trapped. There are no heroic distances to carry. The course gets difficult on the ap-

proaches to its greens. Imprecise efforts miss or roll off, leaving the player with a bewildering variety of chips and pitches from the bumps, swales, and traps Ross built. But the sinner always has a chance at redemption if he makes an exceptional recovery shot. I was mildly surprised, when I added up my score, that I had so many bogies. The course made me think I'd played better than that.

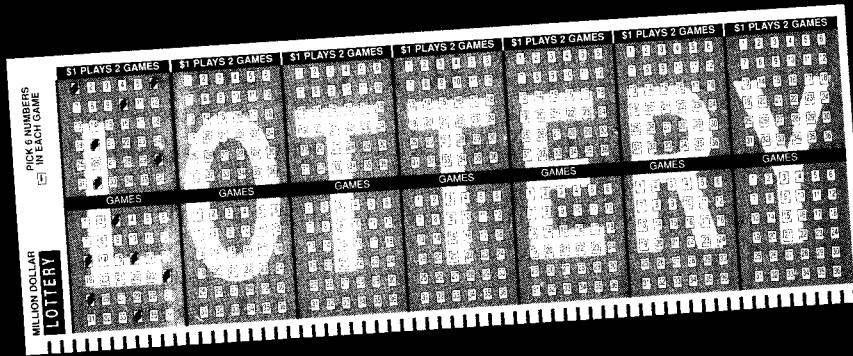
I had one more Ross course on my itinerary—the Linville Golf Club, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. Linville is largely private, the summer retreat of several generations of prosperous southerners. But it admits guests of the Eseeola Lodge (704-733-4311), a thirty-one-room inn with a marvelous dining room and walls paneled in deep-red chestnut, built before blight destroyed the chestnut trees in this country.

A glittering stream called Grandmother Creek winds through the course, touching twelve holes. But not once does it pass near the edge of a green. It collects terrible shots. And it collects the shots of good players who overreach by trying, say, to hit the green of a par-five hole in two strokes. It leaves average shots alone, keeping the course accommodating.

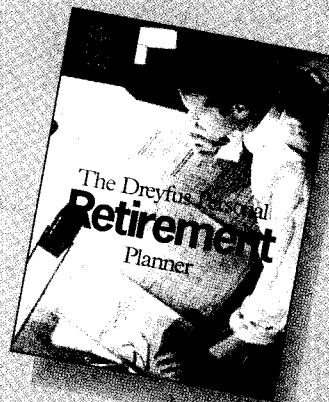
The trees on the course were orange, red, and golden-yellow that day, the sky was like heavy cotton batting—and I finally experienced the epiphany I had been hoping for. For a couple of hours it seemed that I instinctively knew the way Ross had intended each hole to be played. I took what the course offered. I had only to envision the shot and maintain my rhythm and balance, and the ball would go there. When I holed a birdie putt on the ninth green, I had completed half the course in thirty-seven strokes—a personal record.

Then, golf being what it is, I got excited, swung hard on the tenth tee, grounded a drive into Grandmother Creek, and played the back nine in forty-eight. ♣





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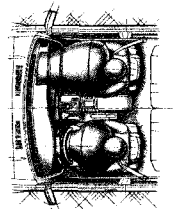
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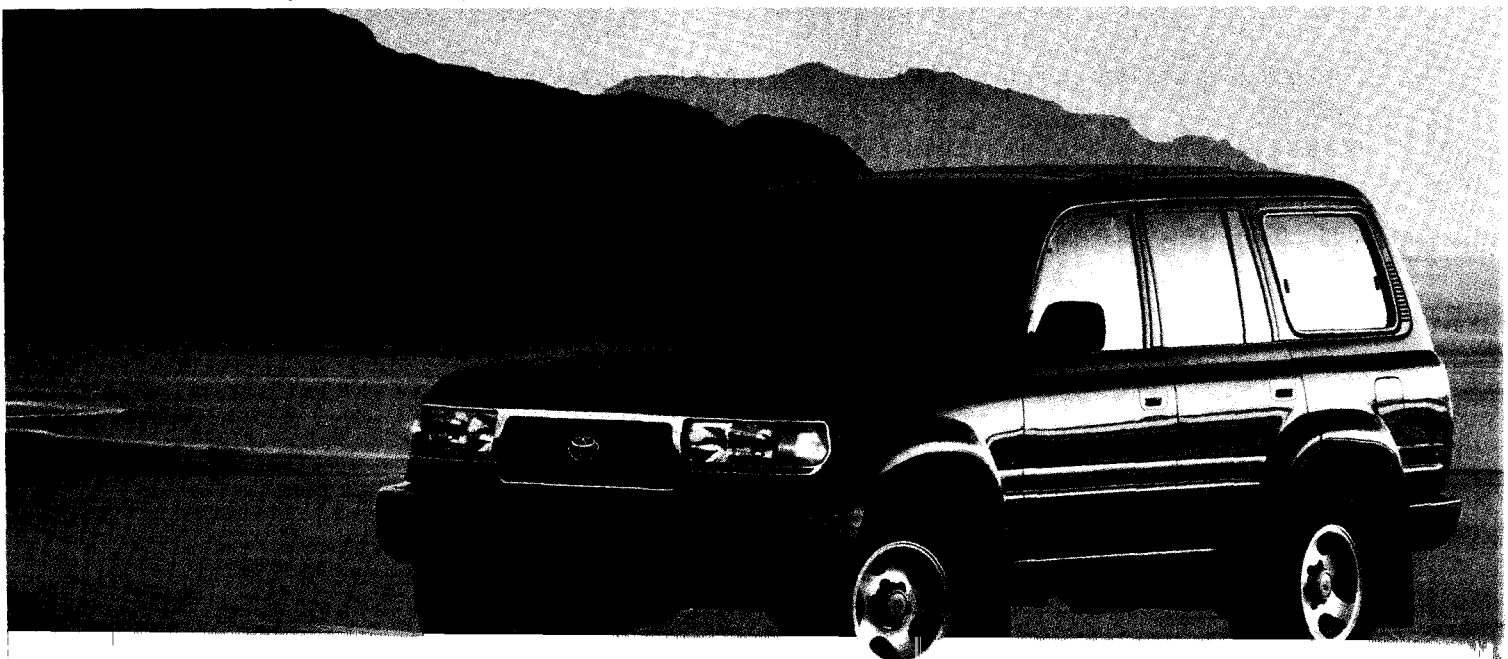
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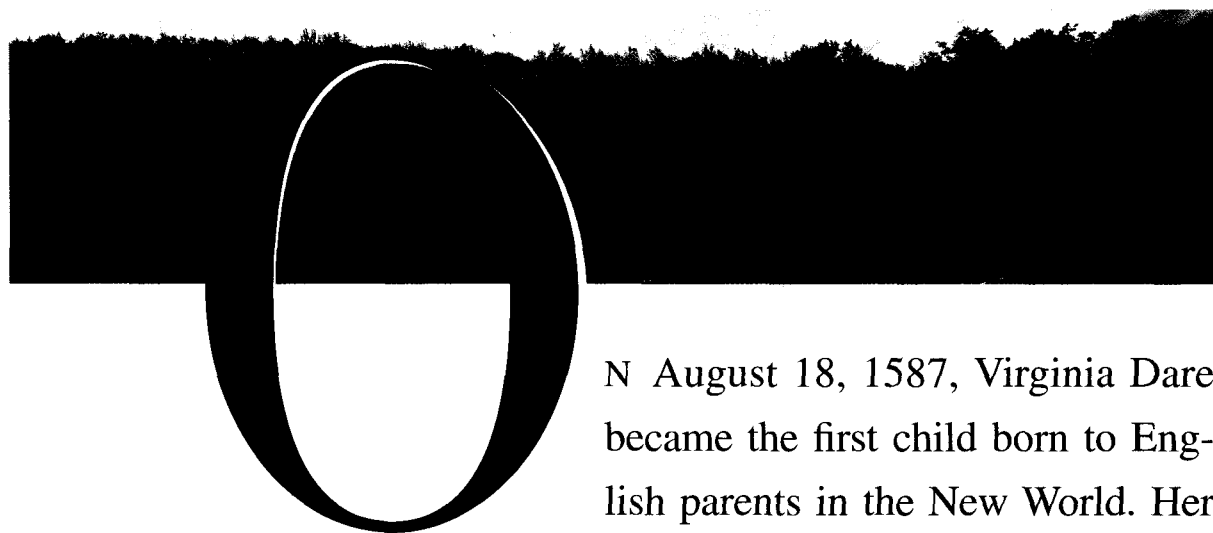


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AN EXPLOSION OF GREEN

by BILL McKIBBEN

The reforestation of the eastern United States— thanks partly to conservationists and mostly to accident— can show the developing world how to make room for people, farming, industry, and endangered species of plants and animals, which have been returning. We can give the rest of the world a better example if we address the problems that even this fortunate region still faces



JOHN WAWZONEK

ON August 18, 1587, Virginia Dare became the first child born to English parents in the New World. Her birthplace—on Roanoke Island, in what is now North Carolina—was Britain's first attempt at colonizing this continent, and was the site of the first recorded British murder of an Indian chief. Though Dare's band of settlers did not survive intact, Roanoke Island was the beginning of the historical process in which English-speaking Europeans settled and subdued North America over the next four centuries.

On September 14, 1987, 400 years later, a team of biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office on Roanoke Island opened the gate of a pen and released a pair of red wolves wearing radio collars into the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. The animals disappeared into the woods perhaps half an hour's drive from the spot where Dare was born. Their species was the first ever to go extinct in the North American wild and then be reintroduced into the natural world from a remnant population in zoos. They were, as surely as Dare, pioneers.

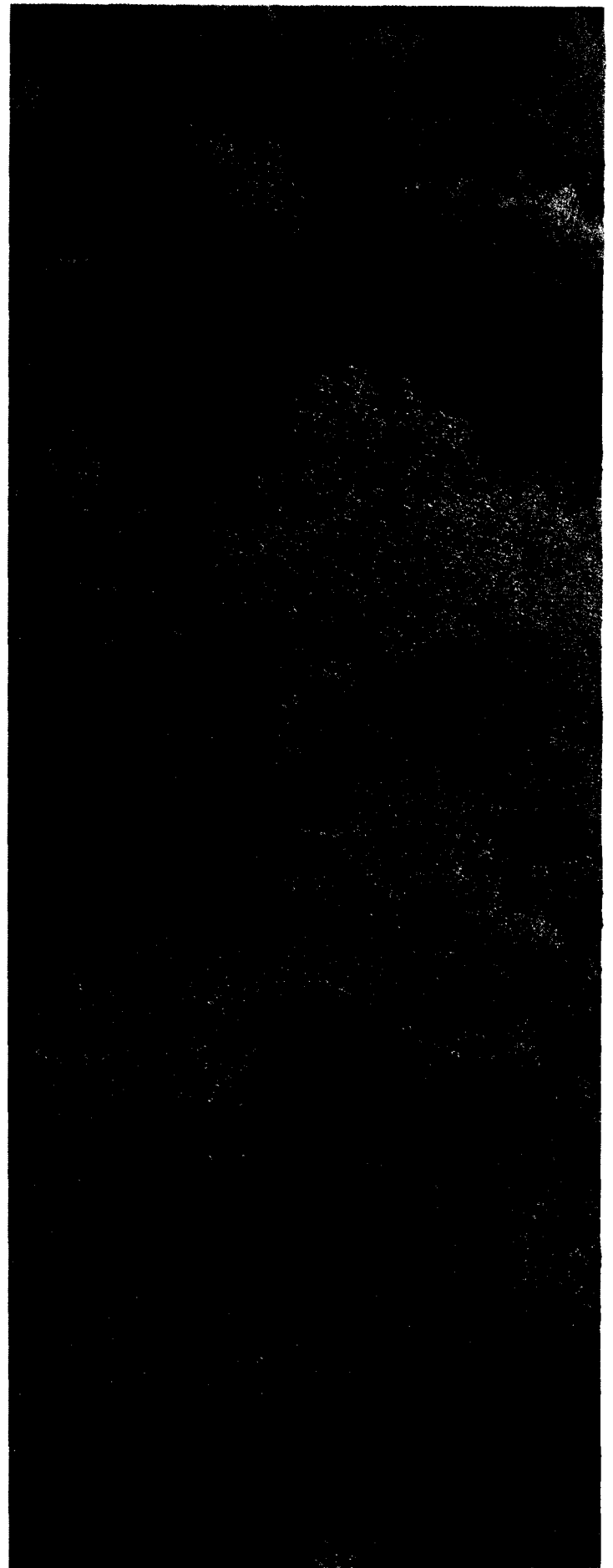
The forces set in motion by European colonization had all but erased red wolves from the continent: settlers made wolves a symbol of the devil, placed bounties on their heads, organized state and federal predator-control programs, and farmed and developed their last few strongholds. The Roanoke Island biologists have watched and listened for the past eight years as the animals they released have reproduced and spread across the refuge's swampy, mosquito-infested 150,000 acres. As of this winter the biologists had counted sixty-one wild-born puppies. One wild-born female had borne four litters, and one of her pups had in turn given birth; a third generation of wild red wolves was howling in the night.

BACK TO NATURE

FIVE hundred miles to the north, from his home on Nantucket, Peter Dunwiddie, a plant ecologist, studies core samples of swamps and bogs, looking at pollen under a microscope to figure out what was growing on Cape Cod and the neighboring Atlantic islands in the time before and after the Pilgrims debarked in nearby Plymouth. It's easy to spot the onset of European settlement in his pollen samples. "Literally in a matter of decades," he told me recently, "the forest was cleared. There's no more oak pollen, and all of a sudden lots of grass pollen. That persisted throughout much of the following couple of hundred years," as Europeans turned most of the area into a giant sheep pasture.

In the late 1800s, just as the agricultural economy was beginning to dwindle, local residents started taking photographs. In addition to his pollen samples, Dunwiddie has gathered a vast library of original pictures along with ones taken from the same places fifty or a hundred years later. "Here's Prospect Hill, on Martha's Vineyard, in 1916," he said to me, choosing one in which a stone wall marched up and over the top of a hill. "There's not a tree to be seen. The retake of the photo today is entirely of an oak forest—a mature oak forest. You can't see the stone wall; you can barely make out the contours of the hill at all, because of the forest."

The scenario—oak and pitch pine replace pasture—has repeated itself all over the area. "Sometimes we had to use a ladder and a pole to get the camera above the treetops just to take a picture," Dunwiddie said. In his bog cores "the pollen is beginning to resemble the pre-European." Coyotes, which in the 1970s crossed the Cape Cod canal and established them-





JOHN VAWZONEK

selves on the Cape, have recently managed the ocean crossing to the remote Elizabeth Islands. "They've very quickly decimated the feral sheep that were left out there," Dunwiddie said. "They're taking quite a toll on the deer population. The deer and the sheep had been browsing down the seedlings; there's likely to be a really dramatic spurt of growth."

IMAGINE the view from a satellite, Alan Durning writes in the 1994 edition of the Worldwatch Institute's *State of the World* report. A time-lapse film that showed you a thousand years each minute would reveal only the slightest changes in the earth's forests, which for millennium after millennium covered about a third of the planet's land surface. But in the film's last three seconds, he says—the years after 1950—the change "accelerates explosively."

Vast tracts of forest vanish from Japan, the Philippines, and the mainland of Southeast Asia, from most of Central America and the horn of Africa, from western North America and eastern South America, from the Indian subcontinent and sub-Saharan Africa. . . . Southeast Asia resembles a dog with the mange. Malaysian Borneo is scalped. In the final fractions of a second, the clearing spreads to Siberia and the Canadian north. Forests disappear so suddenly from so many places that it looks like a plague of locusts has descended on the planet.

If you stared from space at eastern North America in the same three seconds, however, you'd see something different: a patch of green spreading like mold across bread, and spreading fast. In the early nineteenth century the cleric Timothy Dwight reported that the 240-mile journey from Boston to New York City passed through no more than twenty miles of forest. Surveying the changes wrought by farmers and loggers in New Hampshire, he wrote, "The forests are not only cut down, but there appears little reason to hope that they will ever grow again."

Less than two centuries later, despite great increases in the state's population, 90 percent of New Hampshire is covered by forest. Vermont was 35 percent woods in 1850 and is 80 percent today, and even Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island have seen woodlands rebound to the point where they cover nearly three fifths of southern New England. This process, which began as farmers abandoned the cold and rocky pastures of the East for the fertile fields of the Midwest, has not yet run its course. Forest cover in New York State, for instance, continued to grow by more than a million acres a decade through 1980. In sum, writes Douglas MacCleery, of the U.S. Forest Service, "the forest and farmland landscape of the Appalachians, as well as many other parts of the East and South, has come full circle. By the 1960s and 1970s, the pattern of forest, fields, and pastures was similar to that prior to 1800, its appearance much like it must have been prior to the American Revolution."

This unintentional and mostly unnoticed renewal of the rural and mountainous East—not the spotted owl, not the

salvation of Alaska's pristine ranges—represents the great environmental story of the United States, and in some ways of the whole world. Here, where “suburb” and “megalopolis” were added to the world's vocabulary, an explosion of green is under way, one that could offer hope to much of the rest of the planet. The forests, as a recent federal study pointed out, will still take centuries of care before they recover their original grandeur. And backsliding is always a danger; the regreening of the East faces many threats. But it is undeniably real. In his journal Thoreau listed the species gone from Concord by the middle of the nineteenth century: bear, moose, deer, porcupine, “‘rav’nous howling Wolf,’” and beaver. In 1989 environmental police had to kill a moose that had decided to make its home on the median strip of Route 128, famous as “America's Technology Highway.” “We’ve never been faced with a moose ten miles from Boston,” said one game warden, who donated the animal's carcass to a Salvation Army soup kitchen.

American heads turn west when the subject of nature comes up. I have before me the Sierra Club engagement calendar for 1995, with fifty-eight gorgeous pictures, most of them sweeping western vistas. Precisely two come from the thousand-mile sweep of the Appalachians—a patch of orchids in Tennessee and a picture from Maine titled, accurately, “Leaf in Stream.” We are raised on what the writer José Knighton calls “ecoporn”—sunset-tinted photos of the Grand Tetons and other swelling bosoms of the West. But we might take as our emblem the pine: not towering white pines, marked by the first lumbermen in North America with a “King's Arrow” to reserve them for the Royal Navy, but the spindly pine that springs up when cows leave a pasture, the pine that begins the long process of reclamation. From the Pisgahs, the Unakas, and the Nantahalas of the southern Appalachians to the Whites and Greens and Adirondacks of the North, the woods are coming back, and people are starting to notice. In the late 1980s Congress called for a study on how to protect the 26 million acres of forest in New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine—forest that in some cases wasn't there a hundred years ago. “Show me another twenty-six-million-acre chunk,” says John Harrigan, a New Hampshire newspaper editor who sat on the study commission. “Outside of Seward's Folly, I don't think you can.” Yellowstone Park, in contrast, covers 2.2 million acres.

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QUICK DEVASTATION, QUICK RECOVERY

THE story of this recovery begins long before Europeans arrived on these shores. It is worth remembering that no spot on the globe was originally more natural or wild than any other: if America had been settled west to east, we might think of the East Coast as the wild shore, and our calendars might concentrate on Chesapeake Bay and the Everglades. Over time the mountains of the East have risen to heights we would consider western, been eroded, and risen again. The rock on Grandfather Mountain, rising 4,000 feet above the Piedmont Plain in western North Carolina, is more than a billion years old, among the oldest on the planet. Along the Blue Ridge and its surrounding highlands neither glacier nor ocean has covered the land for hundreds of millions of years; the result is a rare biological refuge that preserves much of the story of evolution. Plants could travel slowly north and south along the ridges of the Appalachians as climates changed, escaping extinction. Thus the Smokies boast more than 1,300 flowering plants and a hundred types of trees. Arguably, the southern Appalachians form the most diverse temperate forest in the world.

Farther north the landscape was a mile deep in glacial ice until comparatively recently—perhaps 11,000 years ago. On the glaciers' retreat the rock and till were colonized by fungi and lichens that eventually converted the rock to soil. The soil provided a home for forests that were spreading northward, but the North has never been especially hospitable. Though cold fronts from Canada and warm air from the Midwest and the Gulf bring abundant precipitation, the soils are not deep. Often acidic and fragile, they make agriculture difficult; the

short growing seasons have favored spruce-fir forests in the colder places and a mixture of maple, beech, and birch in slightly warmer sections. Nonetheless, about three quarters of America's original forests were found in the eastern third of the nation, and today about three quarters of the nation's forests are in the East.

Very little of the forest is virgin, of course. Most of it is haunted by the human history that brings time into being—a history that long pre-dates Columbus. Paleo-Indians moved into the northern forest not long after the

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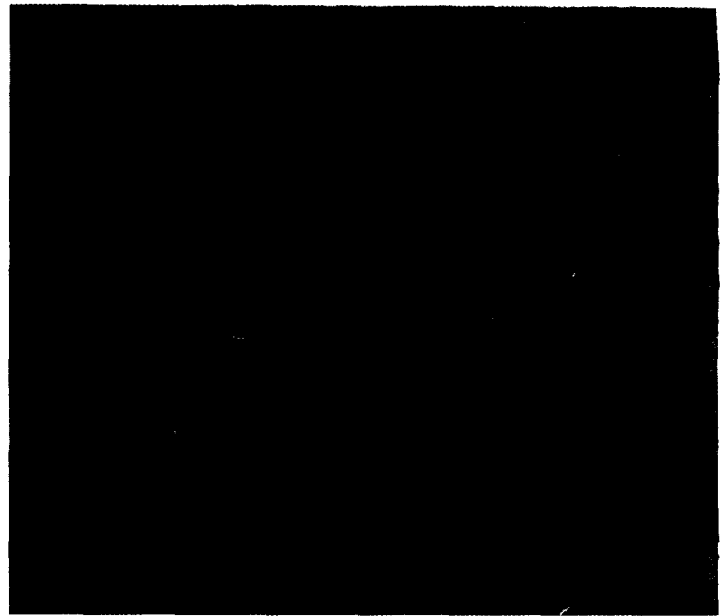
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glaciers receded. Scientists continue to debate whether their arrival caused the sudden dying-off of megafauna—mammoths and mastodons, armadillos and ground sloths, giant beavers, dire wolves, and saber-toothed tigers—that once roamed the East. There is no question, however, that over thousands of years Indians rearranged the landscape to suit their needs. “It is tempting to believe that when the Europeans arrived in the New World they confronted Virgin Lands, the Forest Primeval, a wilderness which had existed for eons un-influenced by human hands,” William Cronon writes in his masterly account of New England’s early history, *Changes in the Land*. “Nothing could be further from the truth.” Indians cleared land for agriculture and burnt some forests once or twice a year, keeping them open and parklike.

The Indian disruptions, though extensive, were usually temporary. When Indians had used one area for a time, they often moved to another. Not so Europeans. Early logging was bad enough, but farmers cut down *every* tree as they cleared pasture, and then brought in grazing animals that ate the native grasses down to dirt. New plant species arrived in shipboard fodder: mulleins and mallows, for instance, and nightshades, stinging nettles, and dandelions. Other agricultural techniques left their own devastation. Instead of rotating crops, farmers planted corn year after year, and corn quickly exhausts soil. Colonial farmers often used fish as fertilizer—at the end of the eighteenth century, Cronon writes, a dollar could buy a thousand fish.

This was merely a warm-up, however, for the destruction in the first century of the new republic. From 1780 to 1850 the population of the United States grew nearly eightfold, from nearly three million to about 23 million. It took about three acres of cropland to feed each person. For a while the trees that farmers cleared for fields met the nation’s demand for timber, but in the second half of the nineteenth century lumber consumption rose from 5.4 billion to 44.5 billion board feet a year.

Wood was used for *everything*—it was the cornerstone of the economy in the same way that petroleum is today. What iron existed was smelted using wood charcoal; to produce a thousand tons of iron a year, a furnace needed 20,000 or 30,000 acres of forest, MacCleery writes. A square forty-acre field required 8,000 fence rails. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, when barbed wire began to replace wood, there were more than three million miles of wooden fence in America. Railroads soon claimed the wood freed up by wire fencing; at the turn of the century the demand for railroad cars, ties, fuel, bridges, trestles, stations, and telegraph poles was taking a quarter of the nation’s timber production. Steamboats burned wood for fuel until the Civil War, consuming a fifth of all the wood sold for fuel in 1840. In the second half of the nineteenth century forest cover in many areas of the East had fallen from 70 percent to 25 percent or less. Eventually the profligate cutting left lumbermen little choice but to move west: there were few mature forests

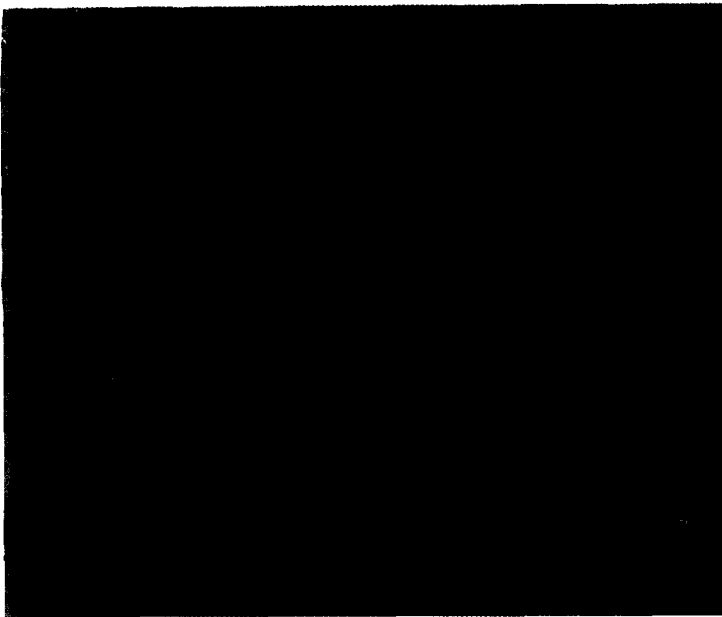


left to take. Loggers moved from New England to New York, Pennsylvania, the Great Lakes, and the South.

Something similar was happening in agriculture. Even for those lands that had not been exhausted by poor farming, improved transportation to the fertile soils of the Midwest meant insurmountable competition. The opening of the Erie Canal, in 1835, is as good a starting point as any. In the decades that followed, the Northeast stopped concentrating on supplying raw materials and began the long transition to an economy based on manufacturing and services. For example, the first Merino sheep arrived near Mount Ascutney, Vermont, in 1809. By 1840 there were 1,681,000 sheep in the state, or six per person. Thirty years later the number had been cut in half: the reasons include that western ranches could now ship their wool by rail and undercut Vermonters. The dairy industry has survived, milk being harder to transport great distances, but it, too, has long been in decline.

By 1890, 42 percent of the people who had been born in Vermont lived elsewhere. It was a Vermont native, Horace Greeley, who said “Go West, young man”; among those who lit out was another, John Deere, whose machinery would transform the plains. According to the author Ben Bachman, Vermont has produced thirty-five U.S. senators, 114 congressmen, and sixty governors who have served in other states. “Vermont recovered because the destruction was a one-shot destruction,” says Steve Trombulak, a biologist at Middlebury College. “It was cleared, pastured for maybe twenty or thirty years, and then everyone discovered Ohio. I don’t believe for a moment that Vermont would look like this if it weren’t for the Louisiana Purchase—if we hadn’t found places where you didn’t break your plough on the stones.”

If the nineteenth century was an epoch of destruction for the northern forest, the twentieth century has been a long sleep. If you walk in almost any woods in the East, you can see the recovery process up close—see the cellar holes that



JOHN NETHERTON

sprout birch, the careful piles of stone now covered by moss and surrounded by forest. From the window in the room where I type these words, I can see the crumbling stone dam that powered the small Adirondack sawmill that once skimmed the trees from all the surrounding ridges. Trees gone; sawmill gone. Sawmill gone; trees return.

For me the proof that what is happening is significant—and right and necessary—lies in the recovery not only of the forests themselves but of much of the life they always supported. As early as 1672 wild turkeys were described as rare in Massachusetts. Beaver were disappearing from the Massachusetts coast as early as 1640 and from the Narragansett region by 1660, as Indians and others filled the demands of the fur-trading posts, moving farther up the rivers in search of fresh supplies. Massachusetts had its first closed season on deer in 1694; eventually deer were eliminated from Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and all but the northern fringes of the Great Lakes states. In *Changes in the Land*, Cronon quotes the nineteenth-century cleric Timothy Dwight: “Hunting with us exists chiefly in the tales of other times.”

But just as the last animals were vanishing, organized sportsmen’s groups, led by Theodore Roosevelt and others, banded together to oppose market hunting, enact game laws, and establish refuges and reserves. Their efforts meshed with the slow return of habitat, and animal populations boomed. Whitetail deer now number more than 18 million—perhaps half as many as were in the original herd, but forty times as many as existed in the late 1800s. Pennsylvania motorists alone killed 43,000 deer in 1990; deer browse so much suburban shrubbery that some homeowners call them “rats with hooves.”

Perhaps 40,000 black bears roam the East. Alligators, placed on the endangered-species list in 1967, after hunting had nearly wiped them out, rebounded within ten years to a population of two million. In 1972, thirty-seven wild turkeys

were introduced into western Massachusetts—where the species had long since vanished. By now the population exceeds 10,000.

As game has spread, so have predators. Even in heavily settled Massachusetts, coyotes—not seen until the 1930s—now live in virtually every town. Larger predators, too, may be appearing. In rural uplands throughout the East the part of the imagination that elsewhere is reserved for Elvis sightings is given over to stories about cougars, panthers, pumas, mountain lions, and catamounts—all names for the same long-tailed wild cat. Officially there aren’t any. As the final clearing of the region took place, in the nineteenth century, and as the deer herds that were their prey vanished, cougars were wiped out across the East.

The Eastern Puma Research Network, however, has received reports of 1,800 puma sightings in the past decade. During hunting season in 1993, for instance, a Maine hunter heard a sound “like a woman screaming in pain.” Topping a rise, he saw a large tawny animal shaking something in its mouth. The animal turned toward him, and he saw a “big angry head—about the size of an average human head.” It snarled, dropped its prey, and disappeared in “three tremendous long leaps.” The hunter collected the carcass of the prey, which turned out to be a bobcat—a smaller feline that is common in the northern forest. Biologists said that the bite and claw marks on the bobcat were the right size for a cougar. The sightings increase each year; the wildness seems to gather. Last fall Vermont wildlife officials confirmed that they had found scat from at least one mountain lion.

RECOVERY AND RUINATION

THIS recovery was not automatic. It is an accident of climate, soil, and economics. Recovery has not come to the Midwest, because the soils there continue to be valuable for industrial agriculture. Recovery has not come to the entire East, either—some places are still logged as brutally as the Pacific Northwest. And even where recovery has progressed farthest, it will not necessarily be permanent. Stand on top of North Carolina’s Mount Mitchell, at 6,684 feet the tallest mountain in the East (in 1835, when it was measured, it was the highest point in the then United States), and you see the twin vistas of recovery and ruination. Clear-cut logging had spread within half a mile of the summit before it was finally halted, in 1915. Now the forest is protected by the Blue Ridge Parkway and the city of Asheville’s watershed, and so the spruce and fir have grown anew on its slopes. Near the top, however, low-level ozone and acid rain have left a dying and skeletal forest, its branches bony and silver. From the observation deck, signs tell you, you can see “Slick Rock Mountain, a residential and resort development. The flattened, barren area is the end of an airport runway.” You can see the scars of feldspar mines that produce much of

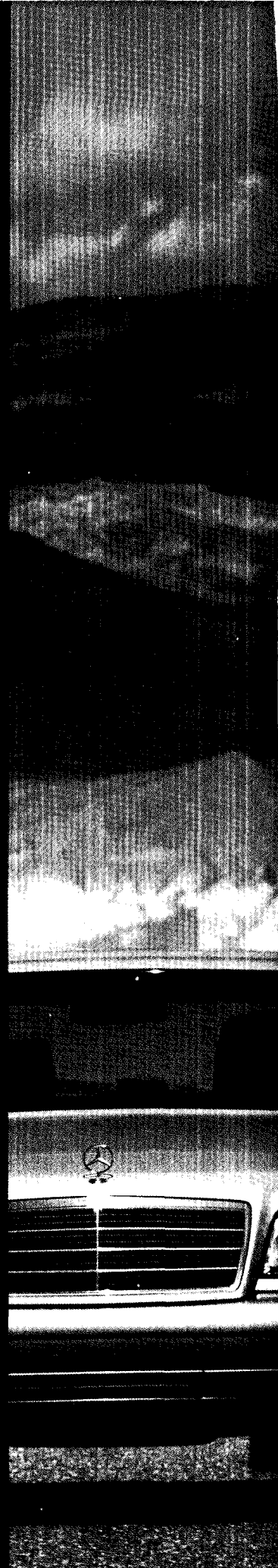
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Though the basic physical trends in the East may be toward restoration, increasingly these are running up against renewed human assaults. To use a regionally appropriate metaphor, the East is like a young sapling sprouting from the stump of an old chestnut that was killed off by a deadly fungus in the early twentieth century. It looks healthy, it seems full of vigor—but it isn't going to get much bigger before it, too, succumbs to blight.

Some of the blight is literal. Global trade, which is ever-increasing, introduces new plant diseases through transported nursery stock, packing materials, and timber imports. A devastating beech-bark blight is ravaging trees in the Northeast, while hemlocks across the region are succumbing to a menacing insect, the woolly adelgid. Still, blights move slowly, at least by comparison with a feller-buncher—a machine equipped with a grappling arm that grabs a tree by the trunk and a buzz saw that slices it off near the ground. The machine symbolizes the industrial forestry that dominates the southern and northern extremities of the region.

Precious little prime eastern land, even that owned by the federal government, is protected from clear-cutting and other devastating “management” techniques. The damage is not new. Steve Trombulak, the biologist at Middlebury, talks of the many plant and animal species that have gone extinct in the Northeast, in part because they depended on old-growth forest that vanished long ago. Whatever the eastern equivalents of spotted owls were, we lost them two centuries ago. “And of course we’ll never know about soil microbes, things like that,” Trombulak says. And the losses are not confined to the past. David Cameron Duffy, who has studied wildflowers in the southern Appalachians, reported recently that even ninety years after the forests were last cut, many species have not returned. The smaller, denser stands of trees that mark a recovering forest mean changes in soil conditions, temperature, and water availability. Beyond mere species, a recovering forest lacks the richness of *interactions* found in an ancient forest—the relationships between species big and small which are at the heart of any forest.

For example, a recent

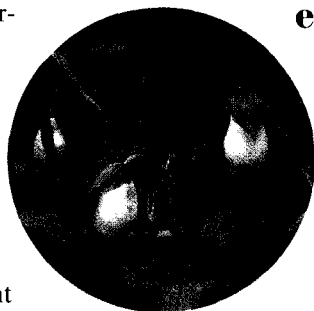
study of national forests in western North Carolina found that catches of salamanders were five times as high in mature stands as in forests clear-cut less than ten years ago. Because they need to keep their skin wet to breathe, salamanders generally seek moist microhabitats. A clear-cut, which leaves an unshaded field, dehydrates the forest floor, reduces leaf litter, and increases soil temperature. All in all, says James Petranka, an expert on amphibians at the University of North Carolina, clear-cutting is killing about 14 million salamanders annually and “chronically reducing regional populations.” When the clear-cut woods come back, they are no longer what we think of as a forest but an “even-aged” stand, often composed predominantly of one species, and, in the words of a recent report from the Interior Department, “structurally and biologically less diverse than natural forests of any age.”

The coastal plain of the Southeast has perhaps been the most badly damaged—the great mature stands of longleaf pine have nearly vanished, replaced by faster-growing species in vast pulp plantations. The same attack of industrial forestry has afflicted the Maine woods in recent years. The ten million acres of the core Maine forest—the largest green blob on the map of the East—houses virtually no permanent inhabitants. Loggers go there, and so do some hunters and fishermen who pay the usage fees required by the enormous timber and paper companies that own almost the whole spread. People routinely mistake the emptiness for wildness, but in fact the Maine woods produce huge quantities of pulp for paper, and export large quantities of raw logs. The cutting has been most Bunyanesque in the past fifteen years; as companies scrambled to salvage timber that was threatened by an infestation of spruce budworm, huge clear-cuts spread across the region.

The damage inflicted on the woods by cutting at such a rate is a sight to behold. You can behold it only if you happen to be in a small plane, though, which allows you to peek over the “beauty strips” that protect watercourses from runoff and

also shield the view of what can look like vast deserts. Rudy Engholm, the New England director of the Environmental Air Force, a group of ecologically minded private pilots, picked me and a couple of environmentalists up at a small airport in northern New Hampshire last summer. We flew across Lake Umbagog and into Maine, flying for hours over land that knows no human settlement and yet is devastated in ways inconceivable in many more-densely settled

JOHN NETHERTON



Though the basic trends in the East may be toward restoration, increasingly these are running up against renewed human assaults. Precious little prime eastern land, even that owned by the federal government, is protected from clear-cutting and other “management” techniques.

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parts of the Northeast. We could see the occasional moose standing on a logging road, but mostly the view was of clear-cuts—tracts sometimes thousands of acres in size on which almost every tree was gone. Other spots had been spared clear-cutting but had been “high-graded” so relentlessly, with every big tree removed, that the land looked as if it had mangle. Many huge patches had been sprayed from the air with herbicides to keep down “undesirable” hardwoods and produce more fir and spruce, which are the woods easiest to use for paper; in the middle of summer the leaves of the dying trees were awash with the colors of autumn. The Allagash Wilderness Waterway was instantly recognizable along much of its length by the line of trees a few hundred feet wide that ran along each side of it. From a canoe in the river you would think you were in the wilderness, but if you walked a quarter mile to pee you might find yourself staring out across a plain nearly devoid of life. In recent years new legislation has limited the size of clear-cuts. In some cases this has led to more partial cutting; in other spots strange geometric figures are now cut from the forest—huge assemblages of clear-cuts separated by narrow “wildlife corridors” that may lead nowhere.

“That’s the Ragmuff area,” Michael Kellett, the director of the small environmental group RESTORE, said as we flew over one particularly barren clearing. “Thoreau wrote about it. It looks like it could be Kansas now—a few little clumps of trees and then vast fields.” Engholm, who frequently takes passengers up to let them see the damage firsthand, told me, “Almost universally, they are just aghast. It’s not any one cut in particular—it’s that they just go on and on and on. There’s virtually no place in Maine where from a couple of thousand feet up you don’t see a manipulated forest.” With the old trees gone, the loggers quickly return for the young ones. Log trucks in Maine today carry eighty or a hundred skinny trunks in one load, where once only a score would have fit.

In the eighties the cutting of the Maine woods, according to Kellett, proceeded faster, relative to the woods’ size, than the clearing of the rain forests of South America. According to data supplied by landowners to the Maine Forest Service, nearly 2,000 square miles—as much land as in all of Delaware—were clear-cut from 1980 to 1992, and thousands of miles of roads have been cut since the river drives ended, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. From the air we clocked log-truck drivers, some of whom are paid piecework rates rather than salaries, topping 90 mph on the gravel roads, their roostertails of dust visible twenty miles away.

A few days after the flight I visited Mitch Lansky, a Maine woods resident who began to investigate the forest industry when, in 1976, he was sprayed with pesticides from three modified Second World War bombers while leaving for his job at a sawmill. He unrolled a huge photo for me on the floor of his cabin, near the town of Wypitlock. “I want to show you what northern Maine looks like from outer space,” he said. “This is a satellite photo from 1990, and these white blotches

are six-mile-square townships. Just in this one little corner are a hundred and thirty square miles of clear-cut.” Lansky took me for a drive around the area, where the clear-cuts stretch for miles. They are growing back heavy in poplar, which once made up less than three percent of the forest. “One other species does really well,” he told me. “Raspberries.”

Paper companies and timber barons have mounted a large-scale public-relations campaign to persuade people not to trust the feeling in their gut that comes from looking at the ugly face of industrial forestry. “Trees are renewable resources” was the industry mantra for years, until the realization grew that what matters is not simply the number of trunks but the quality of the forest. Later, responding to cries for biodiversity, industry spokesmen argued that clear-cuts created more “edge” (places where woods meet open land), which is good for certain species of wildlife—white-tailed deer, for example.

But it is plain that the forest the huge companies are creating with their management resembles a real Maine forest about as closely as “extruded seafood product” resembles lobster. Thoreau wrote, “The surface of the ground in the Maine woods is everywhere spongy and saturated with moisture. I noticed that the plants which cover the forest floor there are such as are commonly confined to swamps with us.” Now, with sunlight streaming down on the clear-cuts, the forest can dry; in other areas, without roots to soak up the rain, the floor can turn to puddles. Whole-tree clear-cuts take everything—leaves and branches as well as trunk, and with them a higher percentage of the nutrients the tree had sucked from the soil. “The ‘working forest,’” Kellett says, “the industry’s current euphemism, is classic *Nineteen Eighty-Four* doublespeak. It sounds industrious, it sounds healthy, but it’s a disaster. It’s a factory.”

TWO ARMIES: LOGGERS AND DEVELOPERS

INDUSTRIAL forestry, for all the trauma it continues to inflict, has produced one great blessing: You can fly for hours over the Maine woods, or drive for days in the national forests farther south, and though you will see clear-cuts, gravel pits, and areas decimated by herbicides, you won’t see any houses. You won’t see the shopping malls and subdivisions and vacation homes that threaten to fragment and degrade habitat even more effectively than did the farmers’ ploughed fields of two centuries ago. “We have two armies of occupation in this state,” says the poet and environmental organizer Gary Lawless, a native of Maine. “There are the paper companies in the north, and along the coast the people who move here for a better life and change it in a different way. They’re clear-cutting it too, only in very small pieces.” In far-northern New Hampshire, says John Harrigan, the newspaper editor, “every year there are more of those all-night lights where there used to be darkness. People from away come here, and they

think darkness is the enemy—bears or bogeymen or something.” People bring pavement, Harrigan points out. Troublesome as a dirt road or a clear-cut can be, “once you’ve paved it, you’ve changed it forever.”

Perhaps the paradigm of development can be found forty miles from the middle of Manhattan, in Sterling Forest, a wood that straddles New York and New Jersey. A century ago it had been denuded by more than a hundred years of fueling iron smelters. (The great chain that the Continental Army stretched across the Hudson to block British ship traffic during the Revolution was forged in Sterling Forest.) But like so much of the East, it slowly grew back. Now it is a 17,500-acre patch of green full of rattlesnakes and bear, a critical path for migrating birds. Only one problem: the nicer it gets, the more valuable it becomes. At the moment the owner wants to develop it into five planned towns, with 13,000 units of housing and eight million square feet of industrial and commercial space. The business plan quotes the work of the environmentalist Wendell Berry on the need for ecological stewardship, and the company is indeed plotting carefully clustered homes. But the unbroken forest will vanish, and in its place will arise a chain of suburbs that together will constitute one of the larger towns between New York and Albany.

Susan Sharko, who grew up in the area, and John Gebhards, who heads an environmental project that is trying to persuade New York State and the federal government to buy and preserve the land, took me for a hike one magnificent spring afternoon on the Appalachian Trail, which runs a few hundred feet from one of the planned communities. “This is literally less than an hour from Manhattan,” Sharko said, pointing to a surging brook with shaggy old hemlocks leaning out across it. “Not *much* less, maybe three minutes less, but still . . .” Every time we reached a vantage point Gebhards would point to the next ridge and say, “That’s going to be the new town of Tuxedo Estates” or “That’s going to be one of the golf courses” (three are planned for the site).

Whenever the trail reached a spot along bare ridge, we saw nothing but forest stretching into the distance. The view is powerful testimony to the enormous vigor of the natural world even on the edge of the megalopolis. But we’re trained not to see it. Gebhards told me that although national environmental groups have endorsed his campaign, he had difficulty persuading them to devote their lobbyists’ time to winning the congressional battle for funds to save the tract. “No one really believes there could be something like this near the city,” he said—let alone that such a large space could be spared development. Leon Billings, a lobbyist for the developers, was more explicit when he spoke to a newspaper reporter about the plan in 1993. His childhood in Montana filled him with “an absolute admiration for the wilderness,” he said. But to speak of Sterling Forest in the same breath was ludicrous, because it isn’t virgin land. “We’re not talking Glacier National Park here,” he said. “This isn’t even farmland in Virginia. This is an area that was at one time industrialized.” By that reckon-

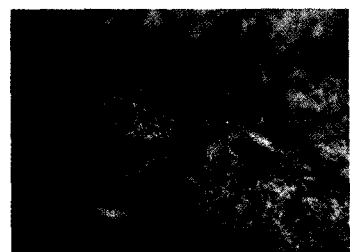
ing there is hardly an inch of the East that should be off limits.

And, in fact, some of the areas that have most recently been heavily cut are also under the greatest threat of development. One of the chief fears of eastern environmentalists is that the twin plagues of industrial forestry and overdevelopment will merge. In New England, for instance, the forest-products industry—which for all the damage it has inflicted has at least kept the vast woodlands it manages free of houses and pavement, and thus theoretically restorable—could decide to start selling off the land it has cleared.

A single deal, one that speaks eloquently of the emerging global economy, touched off this worry. In the early 1980s a British financier, Sir James Goldsmith, took over Diamond International, a forest-products company that owned about a million acres in the northern forest. He quickly sold off most of the divisions of the company, recouping nearly all of the money he had spent to buy it—and was left with all the land, mostly undeveloped forest. This he sold to a French conglomerate that began retailing the land to the highest bidder. The region’s economy was booming, and the demand for second homes climbing—a forty-acre lot on Moosehead Lake, in Maine, which sold for \$50,000 in 1986,

went for \$250,000 in 1988. It was easy to imagine Loon-Cry Estates and Trillium Manors spreading across the New England landscape as quickly as the clear-cuts; the economic term for such development is “highest and best use” of the land. Because what builders really want is river and lake frontage, the journalist Ted Williams has pointed out in *Audubon* magazine, highest and best use “translates to suburbanization of remote watersheds.”

Alarmed at such a prospect, state governments and conservation groups paid premium prices to acquire some of the



MARTY STOUFFER/ANIMALS, ANIMALS



ROBERT LUBECK/ANIMALS, ANIMALS



KEN COLE/ANIMALS, ANIMALS

**RETURN OF THE NATIVES:
A RED WOLF IN THE
SOUTHEAST, A BLACK
BEAR IN NEW YORK, A
MOOSE IN MAINE**

land. More important, New England senators pressed Congress to authorize the Northern Forest Lands Study, initiating a process that was finally completed last fall, when a council of government, industry, community, and environmental representatives released their report. Though the report disappointed some activists, especially because it paid little attention to clear-cutting and other logging practices, the council did recommend some modest acquisitions of land by the public, and called for the reconfiguration of tax codes to make development less likely and reduce economic pressures to cut. Its recommendations, if adopted, might help. But the study process also produced an unintended benefit: it spurred the emergence of a new breed of environmentalists in the region.

THE NEW DEFENDERS

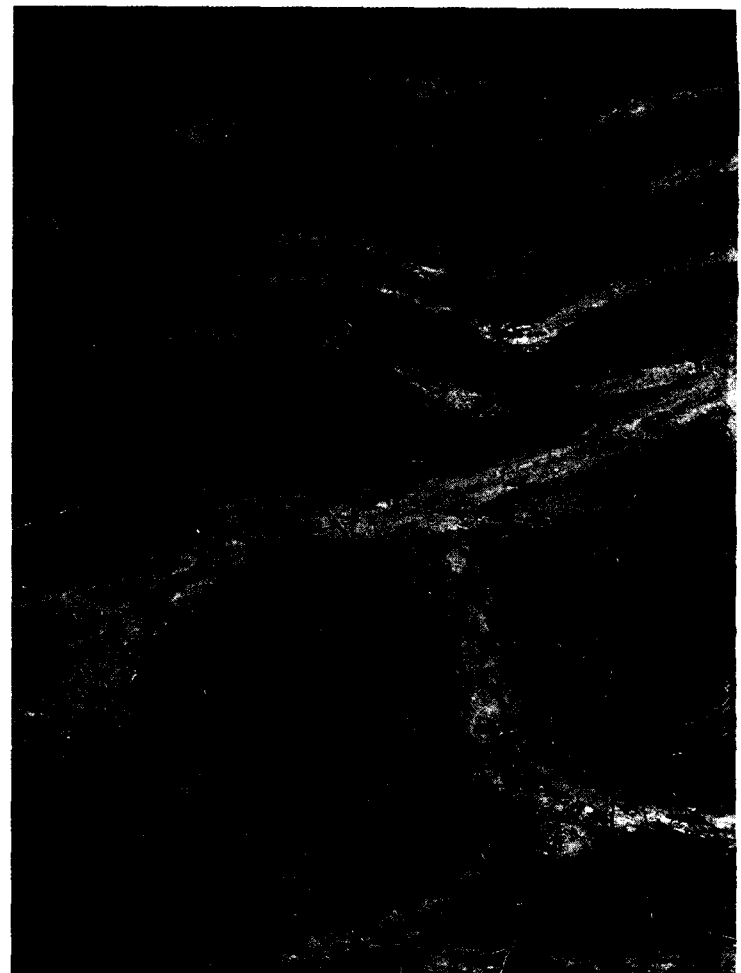
EASTERN environmentalism was long a patrician enterprise—the effort of big-city swells to protect the mountain heights where they spent their summers, the lakes where they had their camps. The products of their time and place, these men and women played essential roles in preserving great tracts of land. But their sort of feudal noblesse oblige, although it lives on in many of the region's conservation groups, is clearly insufficient for the future.

The prototype of the emerging environmentalist is perhaps Jamie Sayen, who lives on a back road in a paper-mill town in northern New Hampshire—a road lined with trailers, none of them with clever names carved on wooden signs out front. He has a big vegetable garden, a wood stove, and “running water” that runs from a spring in the woods.

In the spring of 1987 Sayen published a map and an essay, “The Appalachian Mountains, Vision and Wilderness.” In the years since, he has repeated his call for “continuous wild habitat the length of the Appalachian Range which in time could enable the return of unique plants and large animals—panthers, bears, wolves, moose—that have been exterminated throughout all or part of the mountain chain.” The Appalachian Trail, stretching from Maine to Georgia, could be the “backbone” of this recovering wildness—one strong enough to “support the weight of the massive wild areas throughout the eastern reaches.” These areas would be joined by corridors through zones of human habitation. Sayen wrote with confidence, because he had begun with a simple assumption that drove the rest of his thinking: the East, and by extension

other spots on earth, would be successfully restored when the animals and plants that belonged there could safely return.

His assumption ran counter to the prevailing mood of the Reagan-Bush years, when environmentalists tried to hang on to the



small victories of the past; in the new Congress that mood might prevail again. “Is this a radical crackpot idea?” Sayen has written. “Certainly the defenders of the status quo would have you believe it is. But their ilk dismissed Benton MacKaye’s 1921 proposal to create an Appalachian Trail . . . as the idea of a fool. Yet, the Appalachian Trail, one of the most treasured landmarks in the east, was completed less than two decades after it was first proposed!”

Following Sayen’s lead, others have forwarded similar proposals. Michael Kellett’s group RESTORE, for instance, recently proposed a three-million-acre Maine Woods National Park, which would be the largest such area in the lower forty-eight states except for the newly created Death Valley National Park. All day as we flew above Maine’s huge clear-cuts in the small plane, Kellett would announce, “We’re crossing the park boundary now” or “We’ve just flown out of the park.” At one point Rudy Engholm took us up to about 4,000 feet and turned the plane in a tight circle. “From here you can see about three million acres,” Engholm said. “It makes it all a little more real.” And it did. It was easy to envision the northern anchor of a renewed wilderness system, a block of green vast enough to nurture packs of wolves and herds of caribou, solitary cougar and lynx. “It’s not too late,” Kellett said. “The loggers have done a lot of damage, but there’s still a chance for regeneration.”

ABOVE, CLEAR-CUT LOGGING IN THE CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST, IN TENNESSEE. RIGHT, ACID-RAIN DAMAGE ON THE SLOPES OF MOUNT MITCHELL, IN NORTH CAROLINA



TERRY LIVINGSTONE/PICTURESQUE



MURRAY & ASSOCIATES/PICTURESQUE

Conservationists up and down the eastern mountains are thinking on the same scale. Wilderness proposals covering big tracts of land have surfaced for the Monongahela National Forest, in the central Appalachians, and for the Green Mountain and White Mountain national forests, in Vermont and New Hampshire respectively—indeed, for all the surprisingly large eastern tracts still devoid of houses, which with changes in management might become reservoirs of wildness for the entire region. The Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project recently published detailed recommendations for reclaiming the Blue Ridge Mountains. In some ways the task is easier in the Southeast than in the North,

because the public already owns much southern land as part of its national forests. Many of the millions of acres of national forest in the mountains stretching from Virginia down to Georgia are still heavily logged, however, and are crisscrossed with roads that must be gradually closed if the most sensitive plants and animals are to survive.

A map that environmentalists imagine is easy to visualize—though perhaps unlikely to be made real, given the current Congress. It would start with a big chunk of the Maine woods, to be bought by the federal government and set aside as a national park. Timber companies have sold huge Maine parcels in recent years; the going price seems to be about \$200 an acre and up, which means that a three-million-acre park might be had for less than half the price of a Stealth bomber. The money that could pay for it has actually been collected already, in the federal land-and-water-conservation fund, which was intended for land acquisition but hasn't been fully appropriated by Congress in recent years. Farther south the map would show lots of land that already belongs to the public, including the great state preserves of Pennsylvania and the national forests surrounding the Smokies—forests that could be made off limits to industrial logging. It is not inconceivable that wolves will someday wander all the way down the Appalachians, or cougars find their way back to most of the states where they once lived.

The wilderness proposals reflect the emerging wisdom of conservation biologists, whose insight that big is better than small can be traced to E. O. Wilson's studies of island biogeography in the early 1960s. "In the late 1970s people started thinking about habitat surrounded by human modifications as an island," Steve Trombulak explains, and they soon realized that the smaller such islands became, the greater the chances for species extinction. "By now the evidence is so strong that it seems to me there are probably more scientists who believe you need large blocks of land to protect species than there are who believe in evolution."

Frogs and salamanders, for example, may be unable to recolonize ponds where populations have dwindled in the course of natural cycles, because they are killed while crossing roads during their return to vernal pools. "I'm not saying we need to close every road," Trombulak says. "Underpasses can be built on the major roads. Others might be closed seasonally, when animals are migrating across them."

"One of the things conservation biology tells us is that you don't need all *that* much land set aside for biotic integrity," Trombulak points out. "Species are pretty widely distributed, so you only need to set aside about half the landscape for nature. Now, a lot of people hear that and say it's ridiculous—there's no way we can set aside half for nature. I don't see it that way. That's about what it's like in the Adirondacks. More than half of Maine is for sale by the paper companies. Here in Vermont we've got the Green Mountains. Half leaves so much for humans to do with what they will, so long as they don't create havoc with the air and the water."



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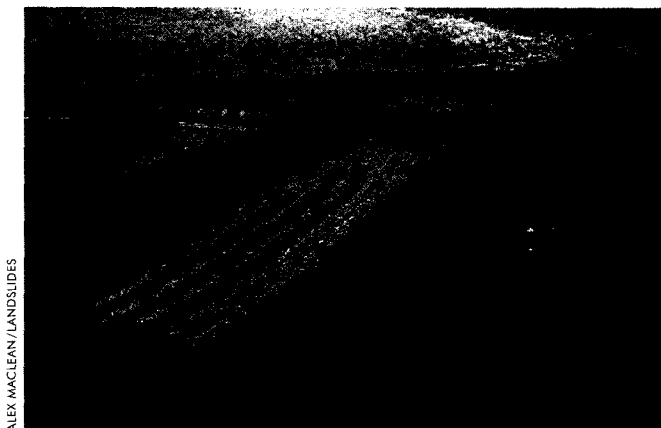
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As you can see, there's a lot we can do. So let's all lend a hand to save our planet...not just on Earth Day, but every day.



GETTING EVERY JOB FROM EVERY TREE

CONSERVATIONISTS have usually been most interested in land that has been left alone for a long time. But if the conservation movement is to make any headway, it will need to consider the human economies of the half that isn't exclusively nature's. At the moment, a strong property-rights movement fears the encroachment of environmentalists. Still, there is a real chance for fundamental change, if only because so much of the area is already so impoverished.



The forest-products sector still employs perhaps 100,000 people in the forests of northern New York and New England. But from 1984 to 1992 logging jobs in the Maine woods declined by 40 percent—in large part because the feller-bunchers and other machines required many fewer workers than the old manual methods had. And this works in a vicious circle. Once a logger has the big new machine, he has to pay for it, and the only way to do that is with heavy cutting. A recent report from the Wilderness Society noted that lumber and wood-products workers in the southern Appalachians average \$15,850 a year—a thousand dollars less than the average annual wage for service jobs. In *Beyond the Beauty Strip*, an encyclopedic account of industrial forestry, Mitch Lansky documents how timber interests manipulate state government to ensure low tax rates. Mill pollution has poisoned some of the region's rivers with dioxin to the point where women of

childbearing age are advised not to eat the fish. The state recently issued a warning against eating tomalley from its lobsters, which is tainted with the carcinogen.

What does this add up to? "The North Country is increasingly serving the role of a third world country, exporting its most valuable raw material . . . for further processing," one study concluded. Mark Lapping, one of America's premier rural planners and the provost at the University of Southern Maine, used a different analogy in *The Northern Forest Forum*, an environmental quarterly.

Northern New England is now the quintessential end-of-the-millennia on-the-periphery down-in-its-cups Appalachia . . . filled with dying towns, an aging population lacking the "necessary skills" to make it in the new world economic order and cultural despair.

Such villages are "chronically poor places which destroy the human spirit as well as the land, animals, plants and water."

To understand what such places feel like, read any of Carolyn Chute's novels—particularly her recent masterpiece, *Merry Men*, set in a northern forest town where most of the trees have been hauled off to the chipping mills, where the only work is "five hammers for five weeks" building new vacation homes, and where the poverty is so deeply ingrained that no one expects much more. Those that can, get out; almost everyone else subsides into bad health and hopelessness. "Modern education is working on everyone to be desk people or people who fail at being desk people," Chute, who grew up in this world and lives there still, told me recently. "There's no chance for an A-plus in working with old people or growing your own food. There's only desk."

Or visit Mitch Lansky in Wypitlock, a town that exists, just, amid thousands of acres of trees slowly regenerating from clear-cuts—trees that will be valueless for years to come. Those who work in the woods routinely drive hours to reach the patches still worth cutting. And a local cottage industry—Christmas wreaths—has been harmed by the decision of a timber company in the area to impose a licensing fee on anyone who wants to glean spruce tips from its woods.

Even those places that still have decent jobs—the paper-mill towns, mostly—are watching them disappear. Scott Paper, whose shares have hit record highs, laid off nearly a third of its work force last year. The company also sold its Maine forest and mills to a South African paper company, preserving for the moment the remaining jobs, but moving control even farther from the local area.

Because these places are worked over, and because they are among the poorest parts of the country, they are also the places with the least to hold on to, and hence may offer the best chance for something new to emerge—or something old. As I was eating breakfast with John Harrigan at a restaurant in downtown Colebrook, New Hampshire, he glanced up every once in a while and made a mental note. When we left, he said, "While we've been sitting here, I've seen five log trucks

going north to Canada with logs to be milled. There's a tremendous desire to do something about that—to get all the jobs possible out of every tree that hits the ground. Eighty years ago we had all sorts of factories—barrel staves, ax handles, shingles, clapboards, a host of products from hundreds of small factories. We've lost almost all of that, partly through our own neglect. We have to stop treating wood like a bulk crop, like wheat or soybeans. It's not 'fiber,' damn it."

"Value added" is the catchphrase for the way to improve the economies of these places: instead of selling pine trees to

labor-intensive manufacture of items such as furniture, musical instruments, wooden toys, and boats can provide economic diversity and bring new meaning into the lives of workers," Jamie Sayen says. In some rural parts of Oregon, where according to timber interests the Clinton plan to close parts of some national forests to logging was sure to destroy the economy, unemployment rates are now among the lowest in the nation; private woodlots support the mills, now that some of the federal forests are off limits.

Tourism is usually touted as the other alternative, and for



ALEX MACLEAN / LANDSLIDES

someone who will turn them into tables somewhere else, make the furniture near the forest. The Wilderness Society recently issued a report calling for a "sustaining forest," not a "working forest," in the northern woods. The report observes,

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE, CLEAR-CUT TRACTS IN MAINE. IN A PLANE, THE AUTHOR WRITES, YOU CAN "PEEK OVER THE 'BEAUTY STRIPS' THAT PROTECT WATERCOURSES FROM RUNOFF AND ALSO SHIELD THE VIEW OF WHAT CAN LOOK LIKE VAST DESERTS"

for instance, that highway departments are once more interested in timber bridges, because road salt does not corrode them; its recommendations include everything from printing phone books right at the paper mills to producing ready-to-assemble furniture. "The

obvious demographic reasons. Seventy million people live within an eight-hour drive of the Green Mountain National Forest, for instance. From 1977 to 1989 tourism's contribution to Maine's economy grew by 5.1 percent a year, even as the timber industry was laying people off. A recent Wilderness Society study found that tourism and recreation in the southern Appalachians' national forests already contribute \$379 million annually, as compared with \$32 million from logging on public land. The study said that the demand for recreation was likely to double in the next forty-five years: two thirds of the American population can drive to Smoky Mountains National Park in less than a day and a half. In the Adirondacks licensed guides have been showing city people where to hunt, fish, and hike for more than a century; for locals who have grown up loving the woods, it's a dignified way to stay in the mountains. A Maine Woods National Park, or a Nantahala

National Forest in the southern Appalachians that was more geared to hikers and campers than to loggers, might well be an economic boon to the surrounding inhabitants.

Such enterprises are also intermediate steps in the long, slow transition to something else. Andrew Whittaker, a Vermont environmentalist, recently looked seventy-five years into the future of his logging region. "The centerpiece of our new economy is the forest," he wrote in *The Northern Forest Forum*.

Small, vertically integrated logging operations have access to a good supply of large sawtimber which they take from stump to board. Local artisans are a more visible element of the economy than previously, and are able to make a living from the production of custom-built furniture, musical instruments, and buildings.

THE PLACE BETWEEN WILD AND TAME

THE patron saint of the American West is John Muir. The ecstasy he committed to paper introduced a whole new grammar of wildness to the world, and just in time. Inspired by his passion, the first American environmental movement managed to save the last pristine corners of the West: Yosemite and Glacier national parks, the great wild lands of Alaska, the Grand and Bryce and Zion canyons. His hymn gathered a mighty choir.

In his day Muir had an East Coast twin: John Burroughs. They were known as "the two Johns," and in fact, Burroughs was the more famous writer. When he traveled with Teddy Roosevelt on one trip, witnesses said, it was hard to tell whether the writer or the President was more popular with the crowds that turned out to greet them. Generations of American schoolchildren read Burroughs in special educational editions.

Burroughs has pretty well disappeared from the national memory, mostly because the landscape he lovingly described has ceased to be of much interest. Burroughs was the bard of the bird feeder, the poet of the small and homey. Under Muir's tutelage, and under a barrage of photos and calendars and coffee-table books from the West, we have been trained to prize grandeur, awe, spectacle. But Burroughs had little use for the sublime. When he finally did visit Yosemite, he spent his first

paragraph extolling the robin, "the first I had seen since leaving home. . . . Where the robin is at home, there at home am I."

Instead of the vast and unexplored wilderness, Burroughs wrote about his native Catskills, where woodlands gave way to pasture and field, where small brooks ran into the placid Hudson. In *his* hymn people played a pleasing role. "Last summer," he recalled in an essay, he watched a farmer "take enough stones and rocks from a three-acre field to build quite a fortress; and land whose slumbers had never been disturbed with the plough was soon knee-high with Hungarian grass. How one likes to see a permanent betterment of the land like that!—piles of renegade stone and rock. It is such things that make the country richer."

If, as Barry Lopez has written, "one of the great dreams of man must be to find some place between the extremes of nature and civilization where it is possible to live without regret," then John Burroughs is as important a writer as Muir, and his vision, too, is essential. His message has been submerged as we have become urban and suburban people who escape to the national parks for relaxation, but perhaps it is beginning once more to be heard. A hundred college students a year apply for the four all-but-unpaid internships at Caretaker Farm, in Williamstown, Massachusetts. There, in the shadow of Mount Greylock, which was hiked by Thoreau and which retains some vestigial groves of old-growth forest, they learn the patient work of growing things by hand, supplying vegetables for 130 local families on a plot that might have supported one colonial farmer. Last summer I asked one apprentice, a good child of suburbia, if the world of the farm had come to feel like home. "It feels completely natural to be here by now," she said. "We're all wondering if the other world will feel as natural when we go back."

Michael Pollan is one of the few writers to have addressed these issues recently. His book *Second Nature* is partly an ac-

**Nature's grace in the East
offers the most important kind of
hope to a world in terrible need
of models. For the East is a real
place—not a Yellowstone, with
clear boundaries to separate
people from nature.**



count of the greening of his Connecticut home and partly a spanking of environmentalists for focusing too much on wilderness. It argues that "the habit of bluntly opposing nature and culture has only gotten us into trouble, and we won't work ourselves free of this trouble until we have developed a more complicated and supple sense of how we fit into nature." He calls the gardener "that most artificial of creatures, a civilized human being: in control of his appetites, solicitous of nature, self-conscious and respon-

JOHN NETHERTON

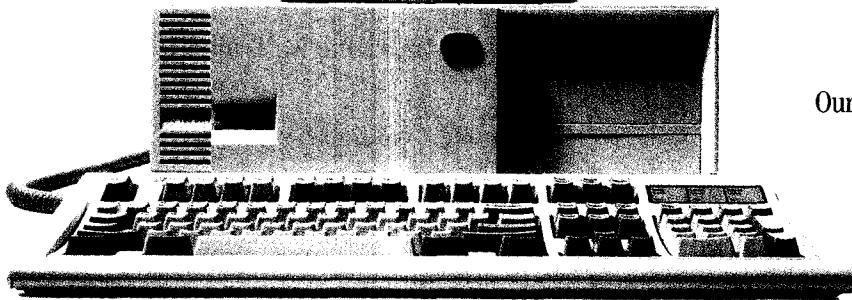
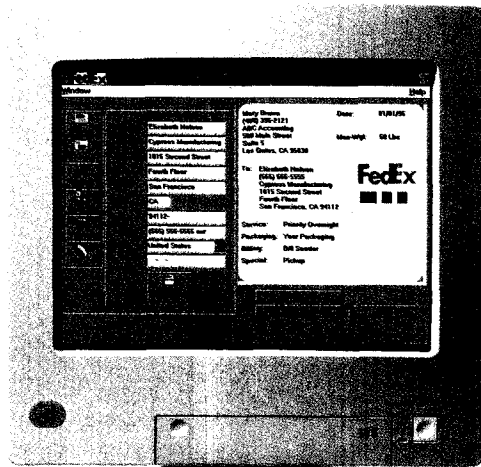
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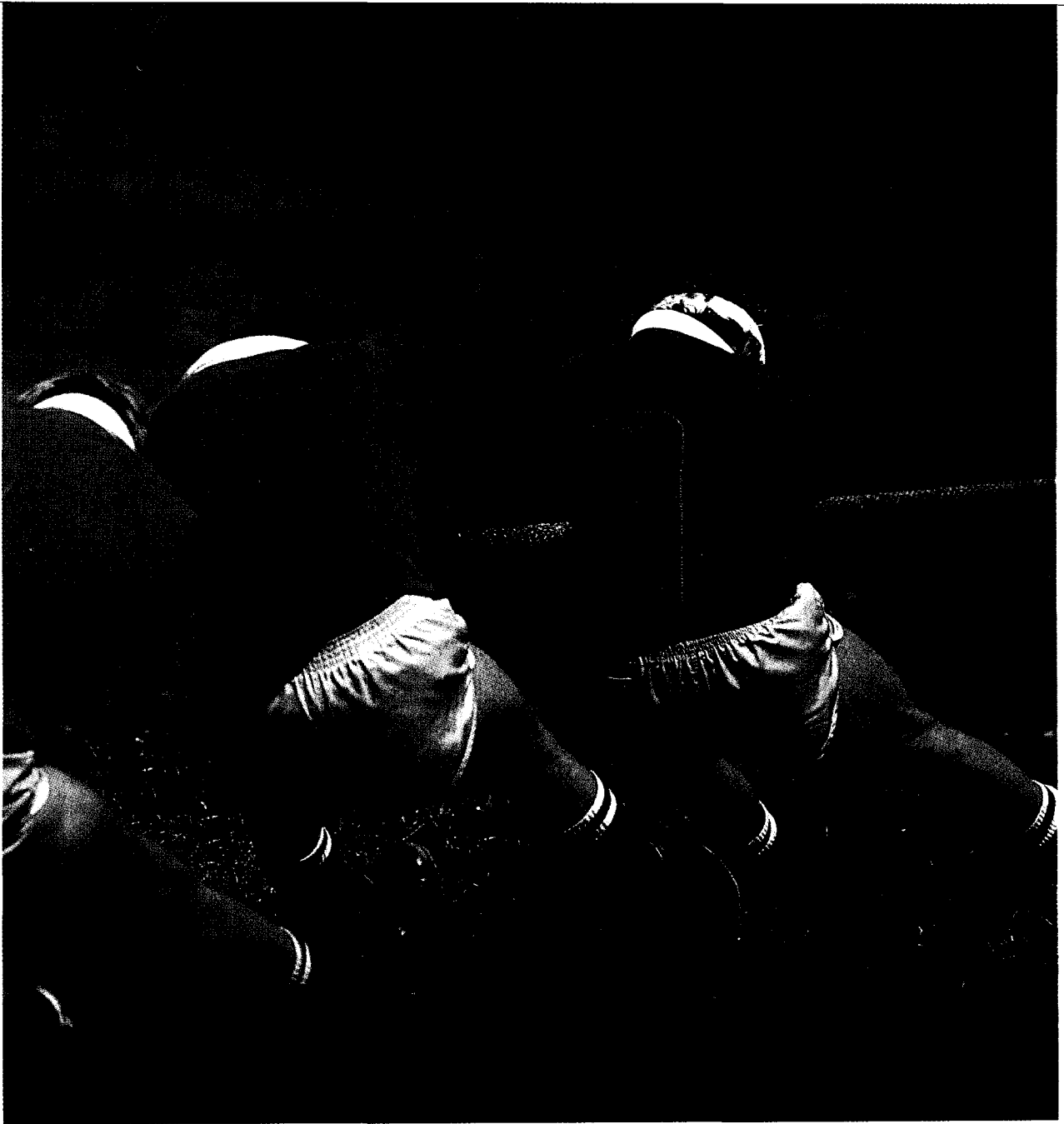
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sible, mindful of the past and the future." He is, I think, correct in pointing out that we misunderstand the middle ground even more than we misunderstand wilderness. It is there, in the places where we must grow food and cut trees, that we work out what it means to be a human animal. So far, so good; Polan is a worthy successor to Burroughs. But the human animal is not the only animal, and huge swaths of the East are clearly able to support life both wild and tame.

THE WOLF COMES BACK

BIOLOGISTS often talk about "indicator species." If the well-managed woodlot and the organic carrot are indicators that human beings are living wisely in their place, then the wolf is an indicator that human beings can learn to accept real limits. The wolf avoids people; unlike coyotes, which adapt to suburbs with ease, wolf packs need many square miles—empty square miles—to roam.

Save for reintroduced populations of red wolves in coastal North Carolina and now the Smokies, the East is wolf-free. In 1630 Massachusetts enacted the first bounty in the New World—a shilling for every wolf carcass. Wolves were gone from Connecticut by 1837, from New Hampshire by 1895, from the farthest reaches of the Adirondacks by 1899, from Maine by 1909. Once the most widely distributed land mammal on earth, the wolf has been reduced to about five percent of its original range in the lower forty-eight states.

And yet its return is not impossible. Healthy populations still live in Canada, including in Ontario's Algonquin Park and Quebec's Laurentides Park. And perhaps wolves have begun the slow drift back down. Wolves might re-establish themselves voluntarily in New England and the Adirondacks, and perhaps even move farther south. But they may need help—the carefully monitored release of animals from Canada or Alaska, much like the release of wolves that is now under way in Yellowstone Park. Among other obstacles, the St. Lawrence Seaway is kept clear of ice all winter long, making overland migration nearly impossible. And government officials have shied away from reintroduction plans, fearing that a public raised on Little Red Riding Hood, and a hunting fraternity fearing competition from another predator, could not cope with the wolf. But the experiences of Minnesota and Michigan show that wolves have done little harm. They kill old or sick deer, culling the weakest animals from the herd instead of picking off the prime specimens, as human hunters do.

Stephen Kellert, a professor at Yale and an editor of the book *The Biophilia Hypothesis*, which proposes that there exists an ingrained human affinity for nature, has done surveys that show "a real fondness" for wolves, even among many hunters, as "a symbol of nature's wonder and beauty." John Harrigan has editorialized extensively in his small-town New Hampshire paper in favor of the return of the wolf and other predators, preferably "on their own four feet" in-

stead of through reintroduction. "Ninety percent of the response I get is positive," he says.

Even the lowing cows that Burroughs lauded could prosper alongside the wolf. A wolf is all but genetically programmed to chase deer and moose and such. Of the 7,000 farms within the Minnesota wolves' range, fewer than one percent have ever reported a wolf raid. Those farmers have been compensated by the state, which should easily be able to afford it—wolves have drawn ever more tourists to the north country, where they buy T-shirts and go on howling expeditions. In short, wolves belong here. The East will not be fully renewed until their packs wander its mountains again. That this is even a real possibility is a wonder, nearly a miracle.

Nature's grace in the East offers the most important kind of hope, not only to a region that has been given a second chance to decide how to inhabit itself, but to a world in terrible need of models. For the East is a real place—not a Yellowstone, with clear boundaries to separate people from nature. In that way it looks like the rest of the world—like Siberia and the vast forested stretches of Asia, like Central and South America, like Africa. Like them, too, it is real because of the devastation it has undergone. In Haiti forest cover has dropped during this century from more than 80 percent to less than one; in parts of the Philippines, according to a 1993 article in *The New York Times*, a "chainsaw massacre of the regal hardwoods" has left erosion, silted streams, and weather that "veers from drought to flood." The same was true of much of Appalachia a century ago. Though other climates and soils may offer even greater challenges, the resurgence of forest in the East gives some distant promise that in other places in future days people may be able to depend on a replenished and revived nature to provide them with a modest and reliable life.

Here, where a certain kind of exploitation began, the fever has largely run its course. That fever still ravages most of the rest of the world; indeed, it finds much of its direction and capital in the financial and political centers of the American East. But not far away, outside the cities and suburbs, the ghost map of this place is reasserting itself—bear and turkey and moose are reclaiming their territory; trees are growing up around stone walls. The old frontiers have closed. That, we are told, is the story of American and indeed world history. A new frontier may be opening here—an expanding frontier of recovery that, given infinite human care and nurturing, might follow the waves of destruction across the continent and then around the world. On a hill in coastal Maine the body of the naturalist Henry Beston is buried on the edge of a second-growth pine forest. His epitaph is from his classic book about Cape Cod, *The Outermost House*: "Creation is still going on, the creative forces are as great and as active to-day as they have ever been, and to-morrow's morning will be as heroic as any of the world." We have little choice in this hard-pitched world but to hope that he was right; and the region where he lived his life offers us at least a slender chance that it is so. ☼

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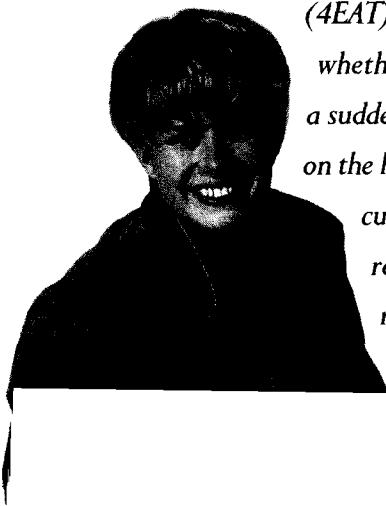
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Horsepower Comparison	
ALL-WHEEL DRIVE SUBARU IMPREZA*	135
Honda Civic	125
Saturn	124
GEO Prizm	115
Toyota Corolla	105

*With 2.2-liter engine option. Source: Kelley Blue Book

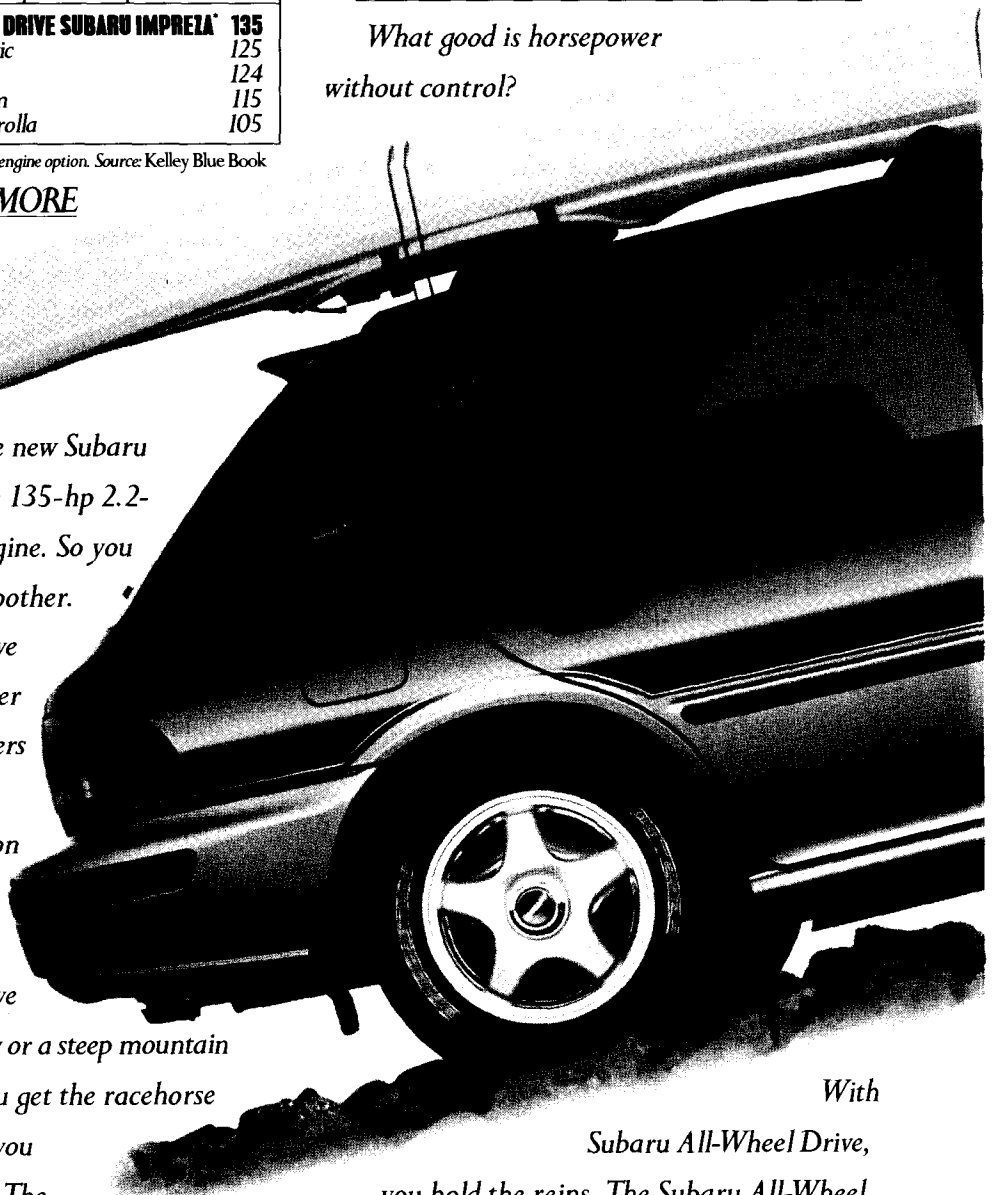
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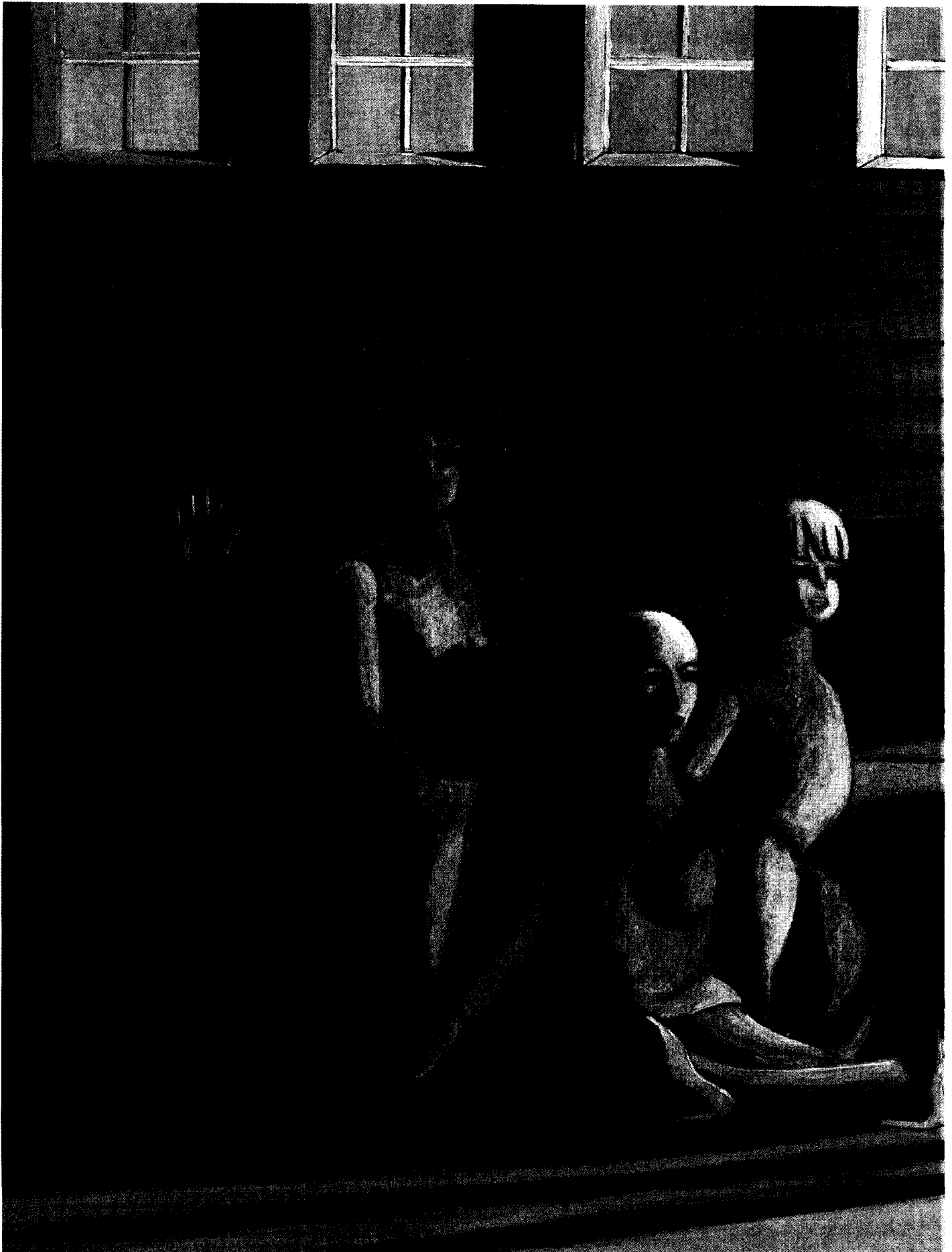
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Dummies

by JULIE SCHUMACHER

THE second time my mother started dying, my brother and sister and I were sent to live with a woman on the edge of town. Mrs. Edna McLeod was a widow who often misapplied her makeup: the dark-red lipstick and dots of rouge were slightly out of place, as if she had looked in the mirror, gotten a fix on her features, and then jiggled her head to the left, placing the colors where her lips and cheeks had recently been.

Dan was fifteen, Bea was twelve, and I was nine.

Our parents had wanted to send Dan back to Maywood—an institution—but Bea had fought hard against it, saying that if Dan had to go, she would leave everyone behind and ride to Cleveland on her bike and stay in a homeless shelter there. She said we were supposed to stick together.

My father pointed out that Dan actually didn't mind Maywood; he had lived there off and on for seven years.

"That isn't the damn point," Bea said. She was just old enough to swear. Rudeness was a brand-new coat she was trying on.

I understood how she felt. With our mother sick again, all of us seemed to be in danger. We were flying apart, crumbling, with no one to protect us but ourselves.

"When is Mom coming back?" I asked.

"Soon." My father looked tired. He would have to go with her, but told us the week before that he was sure she would be all right. But our mother was always dying. The process took years; for half our childhood she was rehearsing. Then she was gone.

"You girls tried your best,"

Mrs. McLeod said.

"That's what counts if
anyone wants to judge you.

You were heroes."

IN a map of northern Ohio you see Toledo to the west, a small ring of roads around it, and the vast blot of Cleveland toward the east, a tangle of interstates and suburbs all around. In between those two cities, below the southern bulge of Lake Erie, you see a grid of smaller roads, the land cut into perfect midwestern squares by the cars going north-south and east-west in orderly progression. The terrain is as flat as a tabletop. If you could zero in even closer, you'd see that each of the small towns, marked by a tiny dot, is built the same: cut in squares and then bisected into smaller blocks, so that any street with a bend in it is called something like Mount Curve or Winding Trail. From where we sat, we thought that getting anywhere should be easy: hang a left to the redwood forest, hang a right to Plymouth Rock.

Edna McLeod lived on the outer edge of Kenford, about a hundred yards from the sign that said POPULATION 9,600. Other than the graveyard and the car wash, her house was the last piece of Kenford you drove by on the way out of town.

When my father left us there, forgetting to kiss anyone good-bye, Dan stood next to his duffel bag on the pock-marked driveway and pulled his lip. It was one of those things that he needed to do over and over, as if he thought that doing it long enough would make whatever was bothering him pass on by. We had explained the situation to him more than once, but usually Dan didn't understand what he didn't want to hear. He was sensible that way, Bea said; she said that most people who were smart were really stupid, and that IQ didn't matter next to common sense.

Mrs. McLeod, her fingers bent at an odd angle where they joined her hands, waved at the dust already settling down the road and said that she hoped we'd get along. She shook hands with Bea. (Bea was easy to remember: thin and pointed, like her name, with freckles and nervous hollows beneath her eyes. Most people didn't remember me, on the other hand: I was large and soft, with a regular face—brown hair and no deformities, that's about all.) Then she patted my shoulder and nodded quickly at Dan. People who weren't used to the way he looked seemed to think that meeting his eyes would be impolite. But Dan was very friendly when you knew him. His teeth were pretty messed up and his gums were bad, but he was more normal than people liked to make him out.

"Do you all bathe yourselves?" Edna McLeod's voice was reedy and thin.

I had a sudden vision of this crooked woman taking off my clothes and lifting me into a round steel tub of boiling

water. I stepped back into the shade of a walnut tree. I craved my mother's soft smell, the cool palm of her hand like a magic cup.

"I'll take care of everything," Bea said. Dan was rocking back and forth beside her in the sun. She kept trying to take his hand, but he shook her off, looking down Route 20 for my father's car.

I figured things would probably get even more depressing pretty fast, but then we started toward the house. It was a light-brown clapboard, and didn't give a clue from the outside as to what we'd find within.

"Jesus," Bea whispered, when the door was opened and we stood on the threshold with the polished light of September streaming in. On every wall and surface were shelves and cases spilling out plastic flowers, old shoes, ladies' gloves, quilts, pictures, broken kitchen tools, eyeglasses, telephones, crumbling books, ancient underwear, and what must have been the largest collection of Ball jars and thimbles in the world.

Mrs. McLeod closed the door, and I felt encapsulated, cut off from my life as if I'd entered a late-night movie on TV. She nudged a rolling step stool out of the way and handed me a card from the nearest shelf: "E. McLeod, Antiques and Collectibles." Next to her phone number was a drawing of a jack-in-the-box resting on a stack of books. "I don't sell retail from the house," she said. "I don't want to be bothered. Several times a year I have the dealers come to me."

"Who would want this stuff?" Bea asked, forgetting to whisper.

Mrs. McLeod showed us down a hallway toward our rooms. "The junk of the world recycles itself," she said. "I'm part of the process. You two will sleep in here, and your brother can have the room across the hall." She rubbed her lips together. They were bright red and made her face look as white and pale as a turnip.

Dan was holding a vase he'd found out in the hall.

"Don't worry," Mrs. McLeod said. "There's nothing very expensive here that can break."

"He wouldn't break anything," Bea said, just as the vase thunked hard on the wooden floor. Dan picked it up again.

I gripped the hem of my yellow shorts so that I'd know where my fingers were. Then Mrs. McLeod put a beautiful pink beaded pocketbook in my hands.

"It's so pretty," I said, touching the shining surface. That was probably why Bea didn't trust me. That was probably one of the reasons, later on, I felt her affection for me vanish into thin air.



PEOPLE used to ask me what having Dan in the family was like. It was fine. A lot of the time he was away, but when he was home, he was always cheerful, and he liked to play almost any kind of game. Sometimes, when Bea and I played marbles or even dolls, he'd come up behind us and pretty soon he'd be hogging the shooter or bending the dolls' skinny legs to conform to chairs, or tucking them into the beds we made of tissue boxes and washcloths. He liked to play with the neighbors' cats, and he raked leaves and shoveled walks for almost everyone we knew. When he turned eighteen, he was going to move to a different school, to a place where he could learn to have a job.

Even though we liked having Dan home, I'm not sure we knew our brother well. In his own way he was private, and what he liked best was to lie on the couch and have my mother comb his hair. Bea liked to pretend that she and Dan were very close, but I don't think they were. He had gone away from home when she was five. She said she remembered playing with Dan when they were kids, before I was born, and that they grew up together. But I don't think Dan remembered that. Bea and I were close instead. Only when Dan came home again, two months before our mother went away, did my sister suddenly seem to love him best.

ON our first full day at Mrs. McLeod's, Bea made a point of explaining Dan's routine. While he was brushing his teeth (noisily) in the bathroom, Bea explained that during the time she and I were in school, Dan would probably like to stay outside if it was sunny; that he liked peanut butter for lunch; and that he would walk to the old bus stop near our house to meet us, because he was used to it and it was something he liked to do. She had warned me the night before that we would not get off the bus near Mrs. McLeod's, because Dan would get confused.

"I think I should keep him here." Mrs. McLeod had set out a breakfast of mandarin oranges, hard-boiled eggs, toast, and black sugared coffee, which would make Bea shake until afternoon.

"What do you mean, 'keep him'?" Bea asked. "He's fifteen."

"He may not know the route from here. It's quite a bit farther."

"It is pretty far," I said, because my legs got tired after school.

Bea acted as if I hadn't spoken. She looked toward the open cupboards and kitchen shelves, which contained the largest collection of unmatched dishes I had ever seen. "The way is straight. All you have to do is point him in the right direction."

Dan came in to show us his teeth, most of which overlapped one another and were hard to clean. Usually he stuck the end of the toothbrush in his mouth and stretched his lips away from his gums, but today he was shy, or maybe ner-

vous, so he made a kind of grin instead. The belt on his pants was wrong side out.

"Good job," Bea said, repeating what our mother and father said at home. She seemed to have aged ten years in just a day. She had smoothed her hair with water and fastened it into a red barrette. To Mrs. McLeod she said, "I'll take the responsibility."

"You don't have the responsibility." Mrs. McLeod spoke softly. "Your parents have given that to me." She looked at my watch. "That's an old-fashioned piece. It's almost time for you to go."

"Dan will meet us whether you want him to or not," Bea said.

Mrs. McLeod looked at my sister. Bea was pinched, narrow, as if someone had been squeezing her all her life. "I'm sorry this is hard for you," she said.

I helped Dan spread butter on his toast. His fingernails were a mess; no one had clipped them.

"It's not hard for me," Bea said. "I'm used to it now."

Mrs. McLeod sipped her coffee. I wondered whether she had ever been pretty: she had watery blue eyes and a square forehead, and a lacy pattern of veins on either side of a delicate nose.

We picked up our books and said good-bye to Dan, who was looking down at his toast so intently that he didn't even seem to hear. On the way to the bus stop I was relieved to be alone with Bea. I realized I had been waiting for a chance to cry ever since we had said good-bye to our mother on the porch and I had put my face against her dress and tried to memorize her smell. I had lost it already. I thought I could keep her alive by remembering her smell. Bea looked at my wrinkled dress and my ugly brown shoes and said that if I wanted to cry, I could walk alone, that she had had enough crying to last for the rest of her life. That afternoon Dan was waiting for us as usual, happy to carry our books and walk us home.

AT dinner that night we sat down at the table, reached for our napkins, and found on our plates an elaborate meal: brown rice cooked in gravy; carrots glazed with honey and wild herbs; and four miniature birds, one for each of us, nestled in the center of our plates. Bea and I stared at the birds in astonishment. It was like having a three-inch cow appear on your plate, or sitting down to a pig small enough to fit inside a drinking glass.

Mrs. McLeod had clearly dressed for the occasion, with a clean white apron and a cameo on a chain around her throat. Her white hair was curled like a private garden; orange lipstick overflowed the small perimeter of her mouth. It occurred to me that usually she was lonely.

"Excuse me," Bea said. "Could you please tell me what these are?" She touched a bird with the back of her spoon.

"Cornish hens." Mrs. McLeod severed a two-inch leg

from the tiny creature on her plate. She wielded her knife with a butcher's skill.

Bea looked at Dan, who was staring down at his plate with enormous eyes. He'd had a pet parakeet once.

I felt a cool and steady nausea creep from my stomach to my chin.

"I don't want to offend you," Bea said, "but I really doubt we're going to eat these."

"Are they tough?"

At home we usually ate fish sticks, hamburgers, casseroles, spaghetti, and other things whose origins didn't so clearly show.

"We just can't eat them, that's all."

Dan pushed the bird off his plate and made a tent for it with his napkin. He ate his rice and carrots with a serving spoon. When he was done, he scraped back his chair and went to the den to watch TV. He seemed to scowl at Mrs. McLeod. Bea had asked him to say "Thank you," but he probably forgot.

We had a hard time thinking of anything to talk about. The three of us in the cluttered kitchen were a small Bermuda Triangle: anything dropped in the midst of us would be lost, would disappear. Bea shoveled her bird aside with a tarnished fork.

"Tell me," Mrs. McLeod said, "what do you two want to be when you grow up?"

I said "A dog trainer" right away, because I loved dogs and because I was not allowed to have one. Bea shook her head. She hated to be asked that question by adults.

"Bea wants to live in a city," I said. At home, when Bea and I talked in our room at night, she used to whisper her plans to me. She hated Kenford and hated Ohio, where there was never anything new; she was going to move to New York when she was eighteen. She would live in an apartment and wear her hair long, and when she walked down the street, people would think she was someone famous. But she would be a veterinarian and a stewardess—all our parents' friends would be amazed. I would visit her from Ohio, and the two of us would eat in restaurants every night.

"Alice doesn't have the slightest idea what I'm going to be," my sister said. She drank her milk and asked for more. She had told Mrs. McLeod that we had to have milk with at least one meal.

I looked at my plate, which had pictures of little Dutch people in hats holding hands around the rim.

"I might run a group home for retarded adults," Bea said. "Maybe in town." She ate a tiny mouthful of rice and a miniature carrot. "You know, if things don't work out here, we could probably stay with my friend Carla's family. The Strommens."

Mrs. McLeod nodded. "I know Bill Strommen well. He's an alcoholic. I suspect he abuses his wife." She wiped her

PONDYCHERRY

The way some people sing for themselves
on the drive home, I kept repeating
"pondycherry" out loud, one of those
trivial chunks that pops up,
tangled with the mind's sargassum,

and wondering where I got it, arrived at
a satiny red-brown wood that came
naturally hollowed from the mill, something
a craftsman might use in his furniture,

an elderly wood-turner and caner of chairs
who worked out of a storefront, its floor
lovely to the nostrils and eyes
with sawdust and woodcurl.

He'd be a local repository who still used
"honeywicket" for *flicker*, "timberdoodle"

for *woodcock*. He'd look at
a yard-sale chair, its seat busted
through like a basketball hoop, and say,

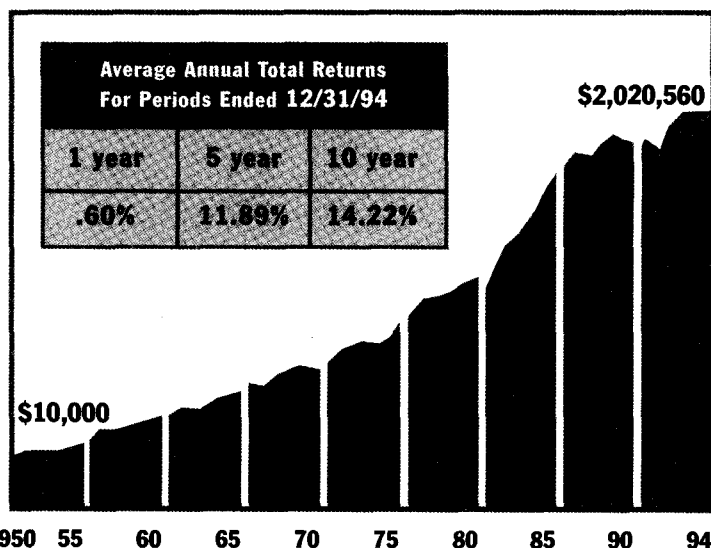
"That wood's pondycherry, used to be
a stand of it the far side of Higgins Pond.
A pleasure to work with, but the fruit
would pucker you permanent."

Pondicherry, the dictionary gives me,
a former province of French India.

But why should I choose between denotation
and the mind at play, or reject another
hint, from the depths under a word,
that I've lived other places, other lives?

—BRENDAN GALVIN

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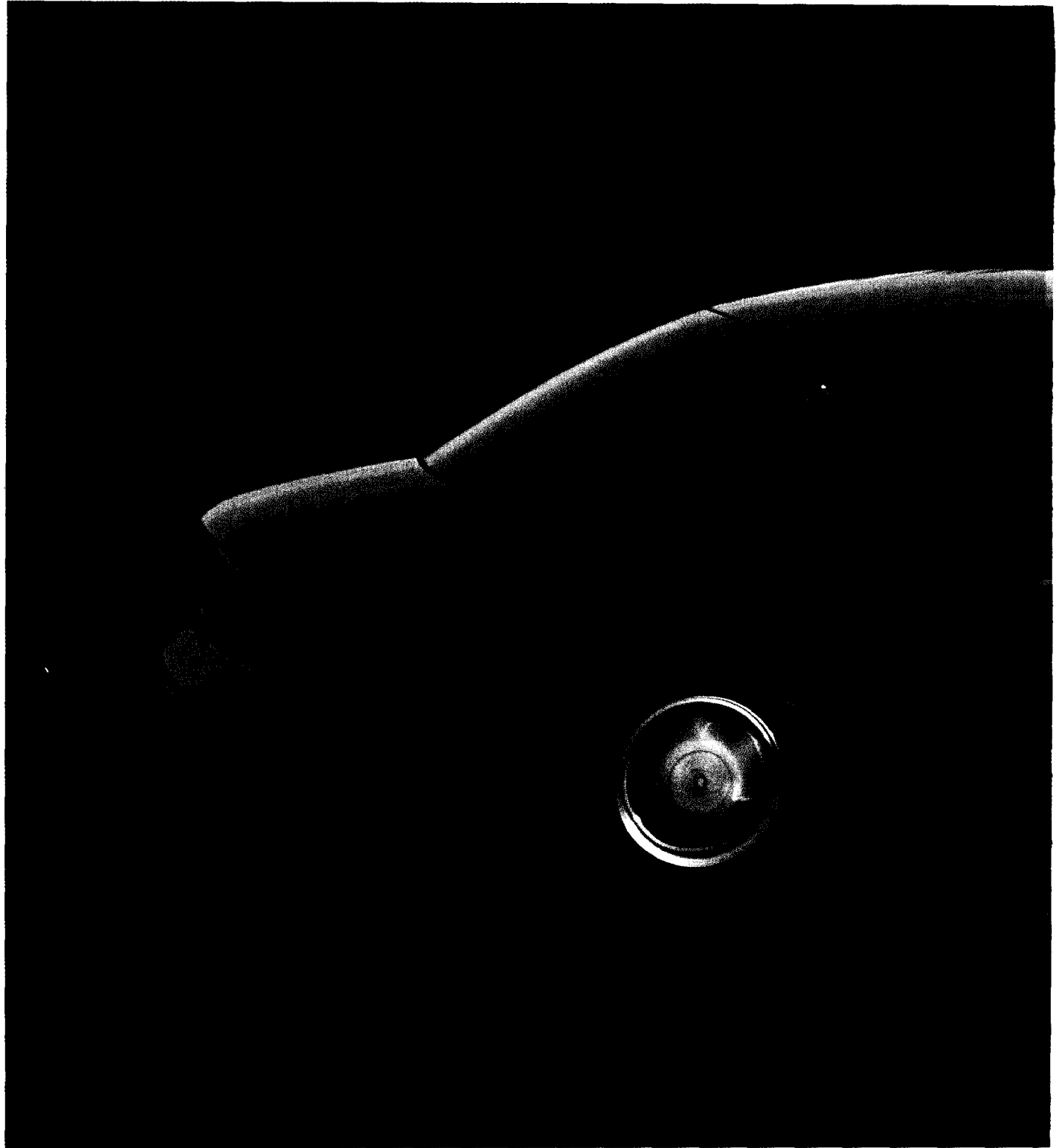
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mouth and pointed out that three extra children to feed was a lot. "And then there's your brother." She looked up, her eyes filmy and light, searching for Bea's.

"My brother's fine," Bea said.

Mrs. McLeod looked down the hall to the den where Dan was watching TV. "He didn't touch what I made him for lunch. I think he imagines it's my fault your parents are gone."

"I think he probably wasn't hungry," Bea said. "He's really fine."

Mrs. McLeod leaned over her food to be closer to Bea. "Whether your brother is fine or not, you aren't to blame. Blame is only destructive. Why don't you try the Cornish hen?"

Bea opened her mouth and closed it. Then she picked up the bird on her plate in a paper napkin and slammed through the door. My stomach was rumbling, but I didn't move.

Mrs. McLeod had her back to the picture window by the sink and couldn't see Bea head toward the compost heap in the back. But I watched my sister take her dinner spoon from her pocket and begin to dig with it, the small bird next to her on the ground.

"Explain to me what she's doing." Mrs. McLeod reached for the gravy.

"Digging," I said, feeling the tears inexplicably start in my eyes.

"Oh." Mrs. McLeod poured some gravy over her bird and then over mine. She sliced the meat from the carcass on my plate and cut it all into little pieces, putting the skeleton on the counter at her side. The food looked good. "Your sister's a very bright girl, Alice."

"I guess so," I said. I tried the meat; it was tangy and chewy. I wondered if Mrs. McLeod was a kind of good witch, who could cure you with her magic cooking powers. "My mother says she needs to apply herself."

"That's true. It isn't right to spurn a gift. I don't like to see people sacrifice themselves. Does she have very many friends?" Mrs. McLeod put the largest of a basket of muffins on my plate. Bea was skinny and I was round, but I always thought of our shapes as givens—our job was to maintain them, good or ill. I added butter.

Bea was still crouching in the yard; digging with a spoon must have been hard work.

"No, not many. Not anymore."

Outside, it was getting dark.

"Sickness like your mother's is a challenge." Mrs. McLeod leaned over and put her cool, dry, powdered cheek on mine. I thought she would whisper to me some secret, some way of getting through the weeks to come. But she said, "Your sister is struggling; you can help her," and pulled away again.

When she excused herself from the table and left the room, I stood by the window eating leftovers from the pots—the sticky rice with too much pepper, and the buttered carrots with flecks of basil clinging to their sides—waiting for my sister to come in out of the dusk and tell me the ways in

which I could help her, and when, and how I could lift the burden she'd taken on.

WHEN our parents called that night, we were already in bed, so Mrs. McLeod answered the telephone in the hall. Bea and I lay in the four-poster double bed in the guest room, looking up at the ceiling and hearing a report about our day. Mrs. McLeod even told them about the hens. She didn't say anything incriminating about Dan.

Bea lay as still as a rock.

"Shouldn't we get up and talk to them?" I asked. I was half asleep, but I could imagine the feel of my mother's hand in the dark, her long nails parting the hair at the nape of my neck. She owed it to me to stay alive, and I'm ashamed to admit that I used to bargain with God about how long I would need her: until the end of elementary school, or until I turned fifteen, or until I married, or until I had a daughter of my own.

Bea said I could make my own decision about whether I wanted to talk to them. She sounded choked, as if she were smothering.

I looked at the collection of things on the wall: colored glass bottles, boxes marked "gloves" and "antimacassars," and books with the bindings gone. Then, just as Mrs. McLeod knocked softly on the bedroom door, I saw the small white statue: two girls holding hands, swinging and pulling each other in a circle, their white porcelain skirts flared out, their heads tilted toward the sky. It had been our grandmother's once. She kept it on her dining-room table until she died. I almost pointed it out to Bea, but she had probably already seen it. Why would our parents have given it away?

"If you don't talk to them, I won't either," I said. "I think we should go together."

Bea turned over. "It's not like that anymore. You have to decide things on your own."

Slowly I put my feet on the cold wood floor. Mrs. McLeod hung up the telephone in the hall.

ON Saturday morning Mrs. McLeod said she needed our help on an errand in Bastion, ten miles away.

"I'll stay here." Bea was working on a puzzle she had brought from home.

"No, I need you all to come." Mrs. McLeod was rubbing lotion on her hands, over and around the swollen knuckles. "Is your brother still in bed?"

Bea looked at me quickly. We had gone into Dan's room before breakfast and found the sheets and blankets off the mattress, the mattress off the bed, and his clothes on the floor. We'd picked them up while he stared at himself in the mirror. Bea said she wasn't going to leave him anymore to go to school.

She unbuttoned Dan's pajamas and helped him get dressed. I didn't like to see him even partly naked, with his

underwear loose around his thighs. Bea put his legs into jeans and said, "Stand up and zip, Dan." and he did.

I said that Mrs. McLeod wouldn't let anyone skip school.

"I might just be sick," Bea said. She pulled a shirt over Dan's head and he said "Bitch." I had never heard him swear.

Bea turned on me before I could say a thing, her narrow face like a needle. "Mind your own business, Alice. Come on, Danny. stand up." She used our mother's voice to talk to him, and someone else's voice to talk to me.

Now, finally, Dan walked into the kitchen, his hair standing straight up on his head. He was pulling his lip again.

"Daniel." Mrs. McLeod spoke slowly and distinctly. "We're going to drive to Bastion on an errand."

"He isn't deaf," Bea said.

When I asked what we were going to buy, Mrs. McLeod said she'd rather we be surprised.

Y ten o'clock we were riding in the back of a pickup truck toward town. Mrs. McLeod sat alone inside the cab, her head barely clearing the steering wheel, and Bea and Dan and I rode in back, our legs straight out in front of us like two-by-fours.

It was cool in the back of the truck, and we bounced along on the metal bed over the potholes, which hadn't been repaired for years. Riding backward we saw the things you usually see on small Ohio roads: animals flattened into disks, mobile homes, the blue sky like a lid about to open up above. The pavement rolled beneath us, uncurling under the wheels as we jounced along. Dan seemed better now that Bea and I were with him. We closed our eyes when the sun turned a corner and suddenly faced us: Bea kept hers shut even when we got to town.

The three of us stayed in the back of the truck while Mrs. McLeod walked in the service entrance of Eugene's, the only department store in Bastion. Dan smiled as soon as she left, looking happy, his old self. He stood up and jumped out of the truck. He could be unexpectedly graceful. "I can lift it," he said, too loud. In the past six months his voice had gotten low; because he didn't talk very much, his voice was always surprising when it came out.

"Maybe you can," Bea said.

"Watch, Bea." He yelled, "Alice!"

We watched. He hunkered down by the tailgate, red in the face, the cords in his neck stretching out to make him look webbed.

Bea turned to face me. "It could be she's mean to him," she said.

"Mean to who?"

"To Dan. That could be the reason he's upset. How do we know what she says to him when we're at school?"

"She wouldn't be mean to him," I said.

Bea chewed her nail. Her hair was as straight and stiff as straw. "We don't know that. He doesn't like her, anyway."

I stood up and checked on Dan, who was head-down in effort, the sweat making a path down the back of his neck. I touched him. "It's too heavy," I said. "That was good."

He spat on the ground.

"We didn't ask you to lift it," Bea said. "Don't spit."

He held up his open palms. At the best moments, outdoors, when there was happiness in his face, I could picture him as a handsome grown man. His hands were dented where he'd hooked them beneath the truck.

I looked back at Bea, crouching behind her knees and elbows. It occurred to me that maybe she was afraid of growing up. Maybe she didn't have enough faith in Dan and me.

"I think everything's going to work out," I said, hopefulness coming over me like a breeze.

Mrs. McLeod was waving to us from the entrance of Eugene's.

"I don't see why you suck up to her," Bea said.

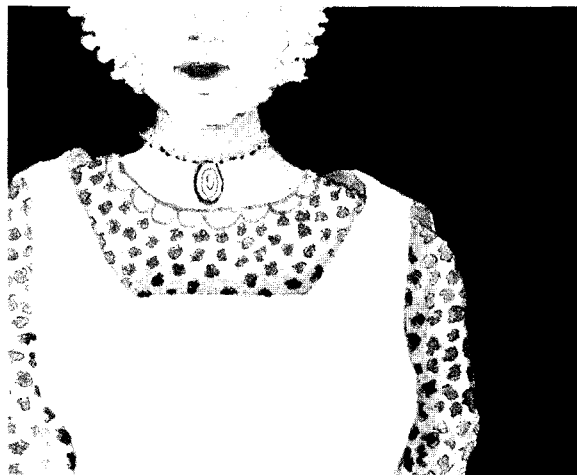
I waited, even though Mrs. McLeod was calling. I wanted Bea to know that I would stick by her; I would be like one of those birds that mates for life. "She's taking care of us," I said.

"She's being paid."

Dan had run up to Mrs. McLeod and run on back, feet clomping in his heavy shoes. He climbed up the tailgate and grabbed my wrist, bringing his face too close to mine—Bea and I had given up trying to teach him how far away you were supposed to stay from someone else. "Dummies!" he yelled. At first I thought he was yelling at me, or insulting Mrs. McLeod and Mr. Buehl, the Saturday manager, who was now wheeling a large cloth bin

through the parking lot. "Dummy" was a word my mother didn't allow at home. But Dan was pointing at the bin. *Mannequins*. Soon Dan and Mr. Buehl were tossing nearly a dozen life-size dummies into the truck with us, some of them whole, some of them missing heads or limbs, and all of them singed or charred and smelling of the fire that had nearly destroyed Eugene's six months earlier. Most were naked and lay obscenely spread around us in the truck, impassive faces hard against the metal floor.

Bea curled up against the cab. When the truck started, she



pulled her sweater up to her eyes as though anyone on the street would notice one pale girl, hunkered down, amid the stack of naked figures and the crooked-toothed boy, standing, laughing, and waving at the passersby.

T first we played with the dummies out of boredom, and because Dan was always with them when Bea and I got out of school. (Dan had still been asleep when it was time to leave on Monday, so Bea lost her nerve and walked to the bus with me.) We'd drop our books and head for the garage, separate from the house and out of hearing of Mrs. McLeod. The dummies were always waiting, sitting patiently on the cold cement floor in a careful row. They seemed to need us, and each of us had our favorite. Bea adopted a frail bald girl with a wire waist, and with breasts that pointed upward toward the sky. She was blackened on the arms and legs, but she was intact. She looked off to the side, so no matter which way you turned her, she refused to meet your eyes.

I chose a woman who was more in need: she was missing an arm below the elbow and one of her legs was twisted, so she couldn't stand up straight—she leaned forward, as if stumbling, or as if trying to catch up to someone in front of her to hear what they said. I liked her better for the game leg and the missing arm; I imagined her coming to life, needing me to help her through crosswalks, leaning on my shoulder with the stump of her arm. I named her Louise. Dan singled out the smallest of the dummies, a four-foot sexless child with a missing chin. He clearly loved it, and I let him dress it in my clothes as long as he gave back whatever I wanted to wear.

Dan worked hard cleaning the dummies. He washed each mannequin scalp to toe, methodically wiping off the grime with a washcloth dipped in water and lemon soap. He was serious: he washed the eyes and stiffened lashes as though expecting the rigid dolls to come to life, to wrap their arms around his neck and call him Prince Charming, Rescuer Divine. He didn't talk to us anymore. After inserting arms into sleeves and legs into pants he took a comb from the pocket of his shirt and smoothed the sticky, matted hair. Bea and I watched him arrange the hairstyles with his hands, sometimes licking the tips of his fingers to pat a wayward section into place. The dummies seemed to be getting ready for something. The ones he'd worked on looked like conservative farmers, neatly groomed.

One day, when Mrs. McLeod moved his favorite dummy so that she could get a shovel for the garden, Dan stood up and hit her in the eye. Bea and I went to check on her in the kitchen and found her sipping a glass of wine.

"Let's be honest," she said, holding an ice cube to her temple. A red half-moon was rising beside her eye, which was clearly on its way to swelling shut. "I haven't given your parents any real news about Daniel, which in most people's minds would constitute an enormous mistake. Partly I don't want to worry them. They don't need it. But I'm not sure that's the right strategy anymore."

"He didn't mean to hurt you," Bea said. "I'm going to make him apologize." She was pale from not sleeping well, and I knew that she'd gotten in trouble with her teachers at school.

Mrs. McLeod pushed her wineglass out of the way—I wondered which Kenford family had gotten rid of it—and dabbed her injured eye with a paper towel. "I don't care about this," she said. "And I'm not concerned about

his etiquette; he doesn't need to apologize."

"He will, though," Bea said.

Mrs. McLeod leaned across the table. "Your brother's a miracle, I know, a beautiful boy."

I had imagined, before this, that once my mother came home, we would visit Mrs. McLeod every now and then and look at the things she had to sell; I would show my mother where I'd slept for three long weeks and we'd buy a beaded purse and look for the small albino squirrel out in back. But possibilities, it seemed, were disappearing. Or maybe they were getting smaller.

"They'll be home in six days," my sister said.

Through the screen door we could see the yellow light of the garage. Dan was sitting there, alone.

"He needs to eat," Mrs. McLeod said.

"I'll get him to eat," Bea said. I'd already watched her, after lunch, tear a sandwich into pieces and put the pieces into Dan, holding his jaw and begging him to chew.

I said I would help. When Bea stood up, I stood up with her. But I wanted to throw myself into Mrs. McLeod's broad lap and wait for the world to come undone.

BEA had told Mrs. McLeod that school was closed for the rest of the week for teachers' conferences. I don't think Mrs. McLeod believed her, but she didn't try to make us go to school. We spent our time in the garage with Dan and the dummies. Sometimes he still combed their



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FACT: In 1992, more immigrants came to the United States looking for employment than there were jobs created in the entire American economy.

FACT: Illegal and recent immigrants can and **do** get higher welfare benefits than U.S. citizens in exactly the same situation.

FACT: Immigrants today are more likely than U.S. citizens to be on welfare, living in poverty, working in low-wage jobs, collecting federal earned income tax credit, and to be in a federal prison. A recent study estimated the annual net cost of providing public assistance to immigrants, minus the amount they pay in taxes, to be at least \$16 billion. Immigrants on average receive 30 percent more in public assistance than native-born Americans. **WHAT WENT WRONG?**

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hair, but at other times he sat with them doing nothing, just touching them now and then: their chipped hands, their starchy hair, the places where they had been injured or damaged or burned.

Mrs. McLeod had a junk dealer in the house—a middleman, she said—and Bea was afraid she would sell the dummies.

“Ask her not to,” I said, looking at Dan. “Tell her not to sell them until we’re back home.”

Bea rolled a penny on her tongue. Ever since I could remember, she liked to hold things in her mouth: coins, bobby pins, bits of stone. “She makes her money on this stuff. I don’t want her doing me any favors.”

“I could ask her,” I said. “I don’t mind.”

Bea looked fierce. “No, we’ll buy one. We’ll ask her how much she can get and then we’ll buy one. How much money do you have?”

I wanted to buy a new set of markers and a Frisbee. “Not very much.”

“How much?” Bea grabbed my arm.

Dan was sitting on the floor. He was a good brother but he hardly seemed to notice us. He stirred his fingers in the oil on the ground. I could feel Bea’s fingers leaving their imprints on my skin. “Two dollars,” I said. But I had ten.

At lunch we ate on trays in the garage, because Mrs. McLeod was still busy with the buyer. Bea forced a piece of tuna salad into Dan’s mouth and when he spit it out, she slapped him. She and I ate his lunch—she told me I had to finish half his sandwich as well as mine—and then she gave me the empty plates and eleven dollars, telling me to say that Dan had eaten everything.

When I went inside with the dishes and the money to buy the smallest dummy for Dan, Mrs. McLeod was counting a stack of twenties. The buyer was gone. I saw bare spots on the shelves along the wall. I had dirt and food on my hands and oil in my hair.

“You miss her, Alice, don’t you?” she asked, putting her money loose on the counter. I didn’t know if she was talking about my mother or about Bea, but I suddenly thought, What if I am the one to move away and Bea stays here? Will she visit me the way I would have her? I put the dishes in the sink and thought of my sister caring for Dan the rest of her life while I lived alone, and I remembered what Mrs. McLeod had said about helping Bea. I started to cry.

When Mrs. McLeod dialed the telephone in the hall, I didn’t object. I watched her crooked finger find the long-distance number and I held out my hand when she pulled the heavy black receiver into the kitchen, over to me.

I talked. I had never, I thought, talked so long.

Mrs. McLeod stood behind me, quiet as dust. When I hung up, she rested her old woman’s head on top of mine. “Come and wash up in the bathroom,” she said.

I thought of the circle of artificial men and women in the

yellow light of the garage, cripples and victims every one. I wished they’d all been sacrificed in the fire.

She ran hot water in the tub and helped me take off my clothes. She handed me a washcloth. I handed her my money.

In only four more days my father would bring my mother home.

 In the middle of the night I woke up to find Bea putting on her raincoat and her boots, and tucking all of our money—about twenty-two dollars; she had found my ten—into the pocket of her jeans. I got up and dressed as she dressed; we didn’t talk. Earlier I had offered to let her hit me, but she wouldn’t even answer. Now I was a shadow she didn’t try to leave behind. The two of us, in the dark, left our room and walked down the hall toward the front door.

Mrs. McLeod sat in an armchair blocking the way. “I don’t think anyone will ask me to babysit again,” she said. “I assume you have food, and your raincoats, and some money?”

I nodded, forgetting we were nearly invisible in the dark.

“Good. At least you feel prepared. That’s important. It’s an illusion, but it can help you through the day.”

Bea was staring at the place in the flowered chair where Mrs. McLeod’s face was bound to be.

“You girls tried your best. That’s what counts if anyone wants to judge you. You were heroes.” Mrs. McLeod sounded worn out. The outline of her hair was in disarray. “I’m sure you know enough not to accept a ride with anyone outside of Kenford. You’ll find two sandwiches in the refrigerator on the shelf.”

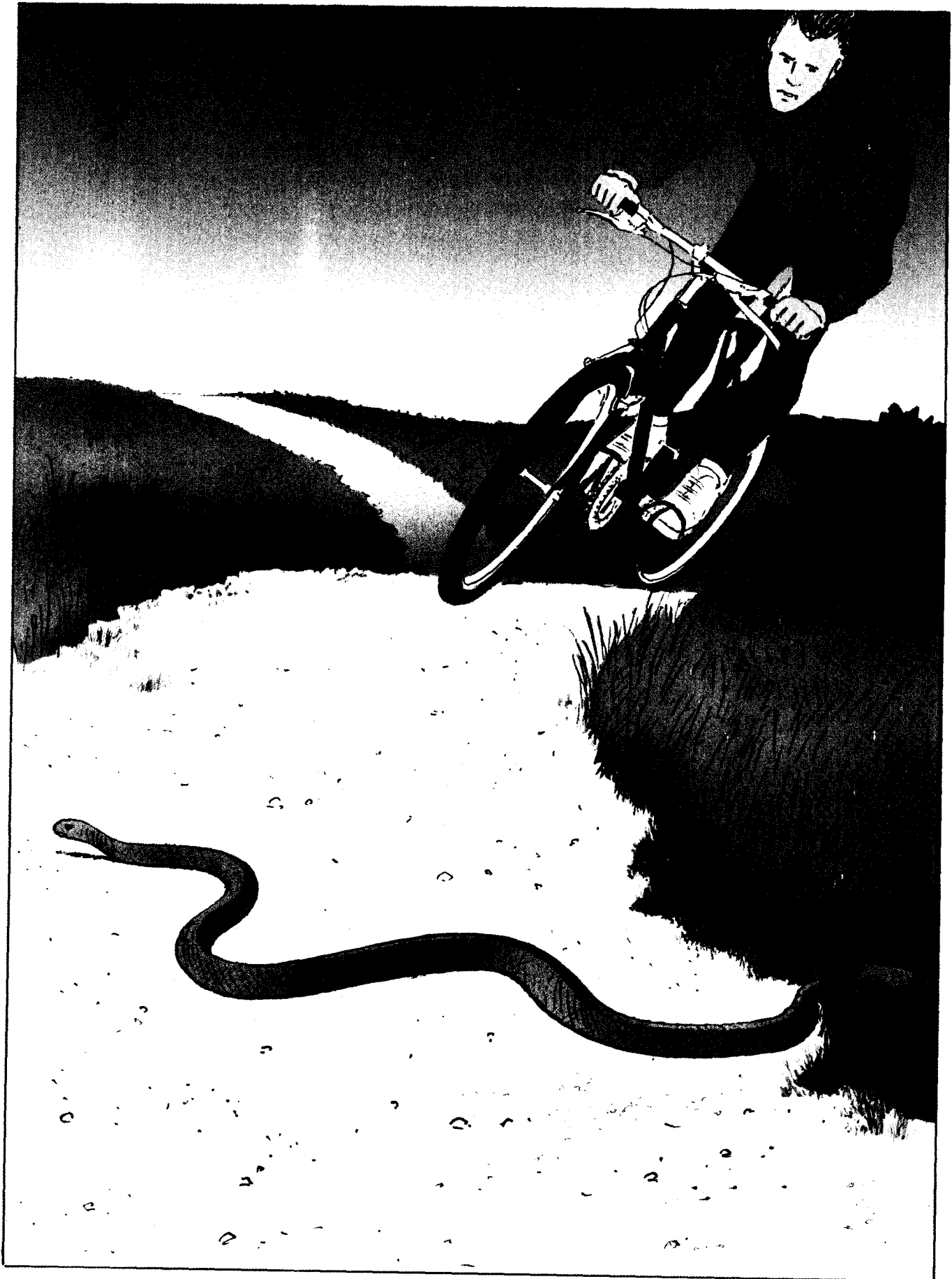
Bea stepped around the chair and opened the door.

“It was the right thing to do,” Mrs. McLeod said.

We stumbled out.

The air was cool and wet with mist. We got our bikes from the side of the house; I kept an eye on Bea the entire time. I would watch over my sister now.

We rode without looking back. I could hear Bea’s breath beside me and the whirr of her gears as they clicked along. Soon the muscles in my legs were aching and my hands were cold in the morning air. I tried to imagine a day when Bea and I would remember our time at Mrs. McLeod’s with a sense of fun. Dan would be gone and we would miss him, but Bea and I would be close, the way I had always hoped we’d be. But I couldn’t picture it very well. Generally I have found that the future is useless. It doesn’t help; at times it may as well not exist. I was stuck on the seat of my bicycle, hearing Bea begin to cry and slow down behind me. I kept pedaling away from her; I didn’t stop. Some moments you can’t escape from. With the shallow taste of freedom in my mouth, I am still whispering Dan’s name on that black receiver in the hall; I am still riding; I can still feel my sister’s hatred spurring me on. ☼



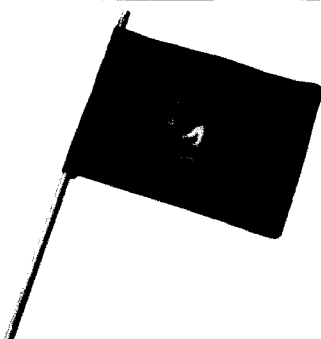
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*Margaret Mead,
March 21, 1977*



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OUT THERE



. . .

A poetry anthology

THE TUNING

Soon in this plaza high above the harbor
Under the statue of St. Magnus Martyr
The gypsy orchestra will begin to play.

Down on the borders of the immigrant ghetto
Couples are gathering at the Montenegro
And the Club Republique, but at the close of day

These strings of lights and early summer weather
Bring us here: smell of traffic, tentative laughter
From café tables, a trickle of television

Leaking from the open window of an apartment
Above us. Clean cotton, perfume, garlic, the sunset
Making the pavement red with expectation:

And now we are the city—the mighty avenues
Named for historic dates, the alleyways,
The brands of car and liquor, the souk, the stone

Obelisk in the old slave market. Now the nervous
Tangle of tones and scales is suspended, the players
All schooling their single root to the raised baton.

—ROBERT PINSKY

DAYBREAK

The shapes that moved outside
our door tonight were four deer
come to feed on the last winter
weeds. The riot of their flight
seemed to echo through the dark
when I left my bed to see them.

Now the valley sends its voices
up through morning mist. Cows low,
the sheep farmer's old border
collie barks as she herds strays,
and the southbound freight is
an hour late. Where our hillside
plummets, a fringe of feathery
wild grasses webbed with frost
bends as though lost in prayer.

My wife built this house round
because a clear loop of moonlight
found the space for her early
on a morning like this. She woke
in her down sleeping bag under
a canopy of second growth to hear
great horned owls call from oaks
creaking in a sudden surge of wind.
When she sat up, there was a deer
standing exactly where a dowser
had told her the well should go.

—FLOYD SKLOOT

IMAGINATION

In the Holocaust survival literature, prisoners
Are constantly getting beaten up with clubs,
Getting smashed with clubs, battered, pounded, broken,
Until they're taught the lesson of the camps:
To be alive is punishable by death.
This happens everywhere, and at all times—
The testaments are vivid—but in all the stark photographs
I've never seen a picture of the clubs.

In the museums I've never touched an artifact.
We have the pictures of the stiffened dead
In trenches, yes, but not the clubs
That put them there. We've seen the Lugers,
And those terrifying snarling Alsatian dogs,
And the whips, the hanging posts, the chimneys.

But not the clubs. Of course they were of hardwood,
The sort so dense that flesh is irresistible.
Forest ash? Birch? Apple? Oak, probably.

And did they actually manufacture them, as Nazis
Manufactured all the grim necessities?
And were they smooth and polished, then, like the canes
And crutches you see everywhere after a war?
Or were the clubs mere local opportunities,
Foraged-after, fallen Polish branches
Unstripped of bark, and craggy with knots?

And just as there was skin made into lampshades
And hair they used to make carpet slippers with,
Just so, were the clubs later carved
Into other useful items? Toy shovels?
Pencils for the children? Tiny Hummel figures?

Little disguised totem souvenirs
Of Jews and Gypsies, Politicals and Homosexuals,
And might the SS have traded in such things
Had they thought of them, after the war,
Though these were men of minuscule imagination
Given monstrous opportunity to wield it?

Totems, though. Yes. Carved folk figures
Of the dying and the dead. What better way to show
What they have done? Imagine, they would fill
The shelves of shops just after the armistice,
Row after row for sale or show, though few alive
With Reichsmarks enough to buy them.

But the rougher clubs, the barky,
Knotty ones that did the most damage, that smashed
And maimed and murdered—what of them? Kindling,
Probably, then ashes up the chimneys, wind-borne,
Then nothing but soft soot on the foreheads
Of the children as they trudged off to school . . .

Questions . . . Questions, and suppositions.
And now they sit in front of us, the children,
At their desks, hands folded. And what can we teach them?
Imagination is a terrible gift. Cultivate it accurately.

—STEVE ORLEN

THE ENTRY

"In Paris, there is a hospital
and a police station," I read
from the yellowed pages of my journal,
though I had forgotten, or pushed
somehow
from memory, that one pathetic entry
scribbled on our seventh day
in the *most beautiful city in the world*.
But there they are, years later,
those words streaked like snuff
across the page, a stagnant pond

through which her face
now rises, that bright senior
dreaming of graduation, her future
almost close enough to kiss.
And there, too, the face
she later recalled, as she wept,
tugging at the inadequate gown
the nurse insisted she put on.
Face of that young man
who spoke no English, so daring
in his pointed snakeskin shoes
and leather jacket, the dark eyes
and bushy brows that spun her pulsing

amid the colored lights of the
discotheque.
And then the white interior of his car,
that room he dragged her screaming to,
strewn with women's lingerie and shoes.
And afterward, the odd, distant keen
of sirens, all night, as she lay there,
still, beside him, staring into the dark,
into the rest of her only life.

—CATHY SMITH BOWERS

General Motors.

"We've got three trucks and
300 bison, and we've never
had a single traffic jam."



People and nature can live in harmony, according to John Sawhill, President of The Nature Conservancy. For instance, bison at the Conservancy's Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in Oklahoma share miles of pristine grassland with tourists and scientists. To protect and preserve the land, The Nature Conservancy gets corporations, landowners and private citizens to work together to help. The goal: safeguarding the environment without destroying jobs or businesses. That's a goal General Motors shares. So we're supplying funds, talent and even the GMC Trucks used to maintain Tallgrass. John says, "The Conservancy gets results you can walk around on." And the results are truly spectacular.

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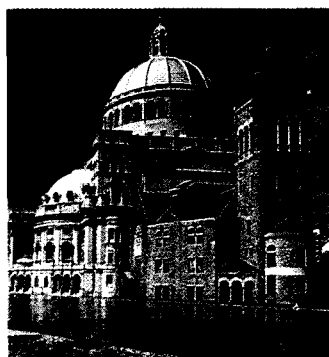
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Suffering Children and the Christian Science Church

by CAROLINE FRASER



“BELOVED in Thee I Am Well Pleased” is the epitaph on the gravestone of James Andrew Wantland. According to the Gospel of Saint Luke, God spoke these words to his son, Jesus, at Jesus’ baptism. Given that James Andrew Wantland—Andrew, he was called—was twelve years old when he died, the choice of epitaph is striking. It does not express the sentiments one usually associates with the untimely death of a child. It suggests satisfaction, rather than regret or loss or sorrow. On the grave of a mature person it would presumably pay tribute to a life of accomplishment and fulfillment; on that of a child it seems almost too much to bear. But Andrew Wantland was the child of Christian Scientists, and the children of Christian Scientists have much to bear.

I know. I am one. Most people who have heard of Christian Science know one thing about it: Christian Scientists do not “believe” in doctors. More accurately, Christian Scientists do not believe in medical science, or what they call “materia medica.”

*The unwillingness
of many Christian
Science parents to
seek help from
physicians for
their critically ill
children has led
to many painful
and unnecessary
deaths and,
increasingly,
to legal actions
that have become
burdensome to
the Church and
its members*

They generally do not accept medical care for themselves, and many do not permit it for their children. They believe they can heal through prayer. Had my brother or sister or I contracted a serious illness or met with a life-threatening accident while we were growing up, we would have been expected to heal ourselves, just as we were expected to heal ourselves of colds, flu, allergies, and bad behavior. That we survived to adulthood was a matter of luck. Andrew Wantland was not so lucky.

In 1992, the year he turned twelve, Andrew had the slightly gawky look of a boy who is growing fast. He had braces on his teeth (Christian Scientists often accept dental care), and his hair was cut short. His ears stuck out a little. He was big for his age and, his mother says, weighed about 140 pounds.

Andrew lived with his father, James Wantland, in the Orange County, California, suburb of La Habra. His grandmother, Ruth Wantland, who lived nearby, and his father were Christian Scientists. Andrew’s parents had divorced in 1984, and he and

his sister had lived with their mother, Gayle, who had been granted primary custody, until 1989. That year Gayle remarried. She wanted to move with her children and her new husband to Pennsylvania, but James Wantland wanted his children to stay with him. A judge agreed that the move might prove disruptive, and decided that Andrew and his sister should live with their father during the school year. Gayle Quigley, who had been raised as a Christian Scientist but had left the faith after her remarriage, told the judge that she wanted her children to be provided with mainstream medical care and not just Christian Science treatment. James Wantland indicated to a court-appointed psychologist that he would comply.

Gayle Quigley alleges that sometime during the fall of 1992 Andrew, who had started the seventh grade at Rancho-Starbuck Junior High, began to lose weight and complained of feeling weak. His friends noticed that he had developed a constant cough and that he drank a lot of water. On Sunday, December 20, after Andrew had missed a week of school with what his family called "the flu," Andrew's father summoned an ambulance. Andrew was pronounced dead on arrival at St. Jude Medical Center in La Habra.

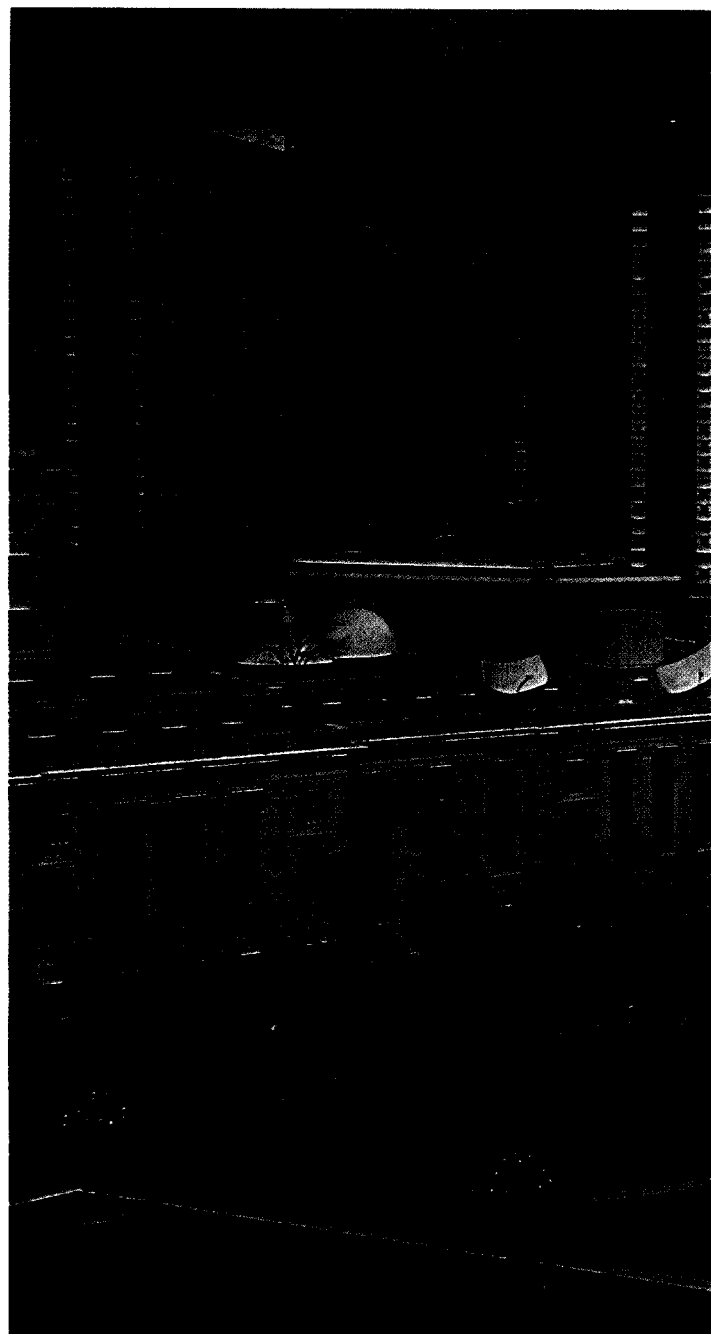
What happened to Andrew that fall, and particularly over the weekend of his death, is the subject of a civil lawsuit that was filed by his mother in Orange County Superior Court in December of 1993. Much more information will become public if the case goes to trial (it may have already; as this article goes to press, the trial date is set for March 13), but records that have already been released suggest that Andrew's case is similar to those of a number of other Christian Science children who have died and continue to die of diabetes, ruptured appendixes, measles, diphtheria, blood poisoning, cancer, and other illnesses that are curable or treatable with modern medicine.

Andrew weighed only about 105 pounds at his death and was severely emaciated. The Orange County coroner's report listed three causes of death and their duration:

- A. Multiple system failure/days
- B. Diabetic ketoacidosis/months
- C. Diabetes mellitus/months

In other words, Andrew Wantland died of diabetes after months of illness. Quigley's lawyers allege that Andrew was in a coma for a day or more before his death, though his father and grandmother deny this. His treatment had consisted of the prayers of his father, his grandmother, and a Christian Science "practitioner," or Church-appointed healer, Ann McCann. It did not include the insulin and fluids that up until a few hours before his death might have saved his life.

The California Penal Code holds that "any person who . . . willfully causes or permits any child to suffer . . . or permits that child to be placed in such a situation that its person or health is endangered, shall be punished by imprisonment." Within the past decade criminal convictions have been ob-



tained in California against two sets of Christian Science parents who allowed their children to die without medical treatment. At this writing Orange County prosecutors have still not announced their decision whether to file criminal charges against James Wantland, but Gayle Quigley's suit accuses her former husband of the wrongful death of their son. Though the court has since dismissed the claims against all but James Wantland, the suit originally also named Andrew Wantland's grandmother, the practitioner, a local Church official, and the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, otherwise known as the Mother Church.

The domed extension of the original Mother Church, on the fourteen-acre campus in Boston, Massachusetts



ROB CRANDALL / STOCK BOSTON

Foundations

THE Mother Church was built in 1894, at the behest of Mary Baker Eddy, who was for years known to her followers as Mother. Born a New Hampshire farmer's daughter in 1821, Eddy suffered all her life from a variety of mysterious and possibly psychosomatic illnesses. In middle age she was an impoverished and eccentric itinerant, abandoned by her husband and family. Believing that she had rediscovered "primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing," she began to teach others to heal themselves, and in 1875 she published a book, *Science and Health*. Along with the Bible, it became the foundation of Christian Science. In an age before antibiotics and modern sanitation, when mind cures of all kinds were popular, Eddy's gospel—

that people who studied her book and practiced its methods could heal themselves of anything—became wildly popular; sales of *Science and Health* brought Eddy tremendous fame and fortune. By the time she was seventy, she was one of the most powerful women of her day.

Since Eddy's death, in 1910, the religion she founded has ceased to be regarded as a notorious and controversial sect and has become quietly respectable. Over the past few decades its membership has been in decline, but though the Church has grown smaller, it has become politically powerful, in large part through the influence of its international newspaper, *The Christian Science Monitor*. During the 1960s and 1970s a number of Christian Scientists occupied powerful positions in the federal government, as judges and as directors of the FBI and the CIA. H. R. Haldeman and

John Ehrlichman, both Christian Scientists, used their influence as top aides in the Nixon White House to shepherd a bill through Congress which extended the copyright of Eddy's *Science and Health* (its full title is *Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*) for an extra seventy-five years. The bill has, however, since been declared unconstitutional.

In recent decades the Christian Science Church has succeeded in most states in establishing the right of Christian Scientists to deny their children medical treatment. Lobbyists have encouraged state legislatures to enact laws that protect Christian Scientists from prosecution for child abuse or neglect. These statutes provide a religious defense against such civil or criminal charges by stating that parents who rely solely on spiritual treatment in accordance with the beliefs of a recognized church are not considered to have failed to provide adequate care. Some stipulate that religious rights cannot limit a child's access to medical care in life-threatening situations; others do not. But none of them makes clear how parents who eschew medical care for their children can be trusted to distinguish illnesses that are life-threatening from those that are not.

The Church refuses to release any figures on its membership, but in 1989 a Church official told the *Los Angeles Times* that there were roughly 7,000 Christian Science children in this country. No national studies on the mortality of Christian Scientists have ever been done, but smaller studies have pointed to a high mortality rate among Christian Scientists—for example, among the graduates of Principia, the Christian Science college. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association have publicly declared their opposition to the laws that allow Christian Scientists and members of other religious groups to withhold medical care.

The Church rejects "faith healing" as a description of its proceedings, claiming that its "scientific" methods are not reliant on miracles and are nothing less than a rediscovery of the methods of Jesus Christ himself. Victor Westberg, the official spokesman of the Church, says, "We pray differently." But the dictionary definition of "faith healing" makes no such distinctions. Massage the rhetoric though they will, Christian Scientists practice faith healing as *Webster's* defines it: "a method or practice of treating diseases by prayer and exercise of faith in God." And the "verification" of these healings offered by the Church can be accepted only on faith. The Church's media guide claims that "Christian Science healing has been verified by medical diagnosis," and that of the more than 10,000 healings published from 1969 to 1988 in Church periodicals, 2,337

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Lobbyists have
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prosecution for
child abuse.**

involved healings of conditions that had been medically diagnosed. Diagnosis, however, is not verification of healing, and the fact that a person recovers from an illness does not prove that Christian Science accomplished the recovery. The late Robert Peel, a Christian Science scholar, in his 1987 book *Spiritual Healing in a Scientific Age*, offered expanded anecdotal accounts of Christian Science healing. Some of these recoveries were verified, most of them indirectly and anecdotally, by physicians, but many of the physicians were not identified by name or institution, and only one physician (who withheld his name) expressed in writing his belief that Christian Science could heal. None of the participants were part of any kind of scientific study.

In 1984 Allison Phinney Jr., then the chief editor of the Church's religious periodicals, wrote in the *Christian Science Sentinel* that "Christian Science, contrary to recent public misrepresentation, is not positive thinking, mind cure, or an alternative health care system. It is a profoundly Christian denomination, with its priority on the worship of God and the living of a Christian life." But the Church clearly expects American society to accept its religious practices as an alternative form of health care and to accommodate it in the laws, the schools, and the health-care system. Christian Scientists have persuaded many insurance companies to make reimbursements for the "treatment," or prayers, of Christian Science practitioners. Insurance companies must be happy to cover Christian Scientists: Church members do not smoke or drink; and in an age when even the simplest visit to a doctor costs up to several hundred dollars and a stay in the hospital costs thousands, a Christian Science practitioner charges, on average, somewhere between \$10 and \$50 for a treatment. The insurance companies that cover Christian Scientists must be aware that people die more cheaply at home, or even in a Christian Science nursing home, without tests, without drugs, without specialists, than they die—or recover—in a hospital.

**A Thorn in
the Church's Side**

HOW do people become Christian Scientists? Although the process of joining the Church is simple (the application is free and requires the signatures of two Church members), I know of few instances in which Church members of my generation have converted to the religion as adults. Both of my siblings and some of my fellow Sunday school students have dropped out of the Church.





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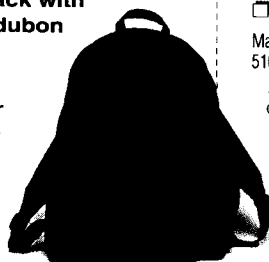
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Nearly every Christian Scientist I have known has been involved with the Church from childhood and has a long family connection to it, going back several generations. Although no membership statistics are available, the closing of hundreds of branch churches over the past two decades suggests that attrition is the biggest threat the Church faces: fewer than 100,000 Christian Scientists may now be left in this country. Another 15,000 or so are concentrated in Germany and Great Britain, with others scattered among more than sixty countries. Many members are elderly. All of the Church's recent controversial activities, including an attempt to start its own cable-television channel, have been inspired by the urgent need to attract new members.

THE GRANGER COLLECTION



Christian Science is often inherited, and like many inheritances, it comes with family secrets. The religion encourages secrecy. Members of the Church tend to hide their illnesses from one another, even within families. My father has never once in my presence admitted to feeling ill. For some years he read aloud to us from the Bible and *Science and Health* every morning, but when we saw him reading "the books," as we called them, at other times, we knew something was wrong. At the branch church my family attended, no one ever acknowledged the obvious illnesses or infirmities of any other members—the man with the goiter, the elderly woman whose arthritis was so bad she could barely walk, the woman with a disfiguring skin condition. The protocol

was to pretend that these things simply didn't exist. The only illnesses that were discussed among church members were the ones that had already been healed through prayer; these were the subject of fervent gratitude during the testimony meetings, held every Wednesday night at every Christian Science church, and in the Church's two religious periodicals that publish testimonies of healing in every issue.

So when I arrived recently at the Wellesley, Massachusetts, home of Stephen Gottschalk, a historian of the Church, I was filled with the furtive glee that comes with the prospect of airing dirty linen. Gottschalk has a reputation, unusual among Christian Scientists, for being brutally frank about his religion. Finally, here was a Christian Scientist for whom nothing, not even the protracted illness of the Church itself, was unmentionable.

Gottschalk's candor is undoubtedly the characteristic that has separated him from his former employer. For almost thirteen years Gottschalk worked at Church headquarters, a twenty-eight-story building designed by I. M. Pei, in Boston's Back Bay. It is located on a fourteen-acre campus that also contains the massive sanctuary of the Mother Church and a huge plaza featuring a 670-foot-long reflecting pool. Gottschalk was a respected member of the Committee on Publication, an office set up by Mary Baker Eddy herself to correct what she called the "impositions" of the press. The committee, which has representatives in every state, monitors everything that is said about the Church and churns out letters to every newspaper, magazine, and TV station that reports something the Church doesn't like. It attempts to forestall publication of unflattering pieces about the Church by directly pressuring publishers. The committee has also acquired another role: it offers spiritual advice to Christian Science parents who are faced with the serious illness or death of a child. Gottschalk is still an avid and active Christian Scientist, but his inside knowledge of the personalities and practices of the committee has made him one of the most effective enemies of the Church's current leadership. In fact, probably the only reason he was not excommunicated or threatened with excommunication, as other Church critics have been, is that he is so well known and well respected.

In 1973 Gottschalk published the first scholarly work about the Church, *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life*. In 1978 he joined the Committee on Publication, and thus found himself frequently responding to attacks on the Church. But on March 1, 1990, Gottschalk and the Church leadership parted ways. At a committee meeting that day he read an open letter addressed to his fellow members, which criticized the Church's "suppression of serious and responsible dissent."

The letter did not spell out what he meant by "dissent," because everyone present knew all too well. Gottschalk had already spoken out a few months earlier, telling *U.S. News & World Report* that "the church is becoming as worldly as the world it is trying to reach." Along with many of his fellow

committee members, he was alarmed at the amount of money the Church had spent during the late 1980s in frantic efforts to update its image and attract new members by launching shortwave-radio and cable-television news services. By 1990 the Church had spent millions and had committed itself to spending millions more on airing a nightly newscast and developing a twenty-four-hour cable-television channel. Jack Hoagland, a Yale-educated CIA veteran without experience in television production, who was managing the dizzying proliferation of communications outlets, gutted the widely respected *Christian Science Monitor*, shifting both money and talent to the television enterprises.

But the profligate spending, and the damage to the reputation of the Church's beloved *Monitor*, may not have been the only issues that Gottschalk and others were concerned about in early 1990. Two Christian Science parents, David and Ginger Twitchell, of Hyde Park, a section of Boston, were scheduled to go on trial shortly for involuntary manslaughter in the 1986 death of their two-year-old son, Robyn. (He died of an intestinal blockage that could have been surgically corrected.) The trial, which was taking place "in the very shadow of the Mother Church," as *The New York Times* put it, attracted an unprecedented amount of scrutiny and raised troubling questions about the Christian Science way of life and its dangers to children. But Nathan Talbot, who was then the manager of all the Committee on Publication representatives around the world, told the *Times* that the unpleasant controversy surrounding Robyn's death had a silver lining: "We are having dozens and dozens and dozens of examples of people coming to our churches and reading rooms who have heard about the Twitchell case and are asking if Christian Science can heal them. Something is happening here, and it's not what the prosecutors intended." In fact at the time, the prosecutors got exactly what they intended: the Twitchells were convicted. Even though the conviction was later overturned on appeal, it fixed in the public mind an image of irresponsible Christian Science practices.

Gottschalk felt that the response of the Church to bad publicity was clumsy and heavy-handed, and that it needed to do more than run full-page advertisements in *The Boston Globe*. The reaction to his March 1 letter was immediate. "Toes haven't uncurled since," Gottschalk told me cheerfully. Nathan Talbot was deeply disturbed by the letter. The day

Left, Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science. Right (top), Bliss Knapp, the author of *The Destiny of the Mother Church*, and (below) Nathan Talbot, a spokesperson for the Church during many of the recent "child cases."

after the committee meeting Talbot ordered Gottschalk to go home and pray about his "attitude." Gottschalk stayed home for a month and then returned to tell Talbot that he could not agree to be silent. They couldn't reach a compromise, and so a "parting

of the ways" occurred. Before the end of the year five of Gottschalk's associates had resigned or been fired.

Steve Gottschalk is now a free-lance scholar. He works at home, amid an extensive personal library of Christian Science literature. He writes regularly about Christian Science for encyclopedias (including the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*) and religious periodicals, and his wife, Mary, is a free-lance teacher of German. The Gottschalks have two children of their own—the younger of them in high school—and a foster son.

Gottschalk seems to enjoy being a thorn in the Church's side. The day I visited him, he took me up to his office and regaled me with tales of the Church's botched decade-long electronic-media experiment. He is a plump man, with a round, friendly face that seems at odds with his sharp tongue. The enormous financial outlay on radio and television, which almost bankrupted the Church and had to be largely abandoned in 1992, was, he said, "like Napoleon invading Russia." He also told me the fascinating story of Bliss Knapp, a personality who continues to divide the Church long after his death.



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PAT GREENHOUSE / THE BOSTON GLOBE

Bliss Knapp and His Book

BLISS Knapp, born in 1877 to Ira Oscar and Flavia Stickney Knapp, met Mary Baker Eddy when he was eleven. His parents were consumed with Christian Science, believing that one of Eddy's followers had cured Mrs. Knapp of a serious illness. Ira Knapp's New Hampshire neighbors eventually offered to tar and feather him and ride him out of town on a rail for his proselytizing activities. Inspired either by this threat or by Eddy's interpretation of a vision he'd had, Knapp moved Bliss and the rest of his family to Boston, where he threw himself into a close inspection of the biblical Book of Revelation. He became known among Christian Scientists as "the Revelation man," and Eddy named him one of the first directors of the board that would oversee her Church.

Bliss Knapp followed in his father's footsteps, devoting

his life to the religion as a popular traveling lecturer and teacher. In a religion with no preachers or pastors, the Christian Science teacher, who offers “class instruction” to adult students and who maintains a lifelong relationship with his pupils, has an inordinate amount of influence; by most accounts Bliss Knapp was extremely charismatic and influential. At some point after Eddy’s death he began to teach his students that Eddy was none other than the woman described in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation: “A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” He also wrote a book, *The Destiny of the Mother Church*.

Knapp had his book—part family history, part religious speculation—privately printed in 1947 and submitted it to the Christian Science Publishing Society. The board of directors unanimously rejected it, and asked Knapp to retrieve the copy he had sent to the Library of Congress and destroy it, along with all the other printed copies and the plates that had been used to print them. Knapp’s offense was his claim that Mary Baker Eddy was a figure as divine as Jesus. The board did allow that Jesus and Mary Baker Eddy were “the two most transparent sources of spiritual light the world has ever known,” but they took strong exception to Knapp’s assertion that the two were, unlike the rest of us, personally known to God—or, as they put it, “that God is, so to speak, a respecter of persons.” The whole idea, of course, had come from the Revelation man himself, Ira Knapp, but the board warned Bliss to keep his thoughts about Revelation to himself, writing to him in 1948,

You probably do not know that we have in the Archives a letter from Mrs. Eddy dealing definitely with this subject. The statement in her letter, referring to Revelation, follows: “Revelation should never be meddled with. No one but myself is equal to the first lessons in that.”

Mary Baker Eddy was nobody’s fool. She wanted her Church to be accepted by society, and she knew, having been raised as a Congregationalist, that the surest way to earn the enmity of the Christian world was to set herself up as a holy figure. But she could be coy in defining herself. She wrote to the *New York Herald* in 1895, “‘Am I the second Christ?’ Even the question shocks me. What I am is for God to declare in His infinite mercy. As it is, I claim nothing more than what I am, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, and the blessing it has been to mankind which eternity enfolds.” Her ambiguity left the door open for Knapp’s re-evaluation.

**Imagine yourself
at six or nine
or twelve being
very sick and
hearing your
parents read to
you Mary
Baker Eddy’s
definition of
man, which
begins, “Man is
not matter;
he is not made
up of brain,
blood, bones, and
other material
elements.”**

Knapp spent the rest of his life brooding over the board’s rebuke, and when he died, in 1958, he took revenge in his will. He had married into a wealthy family, and he arranged that the money belonging to him, his wife, and his wife’s sister would be left to the Church on the condition that it publish his book by 1993. If it failed to do so, everything would go to Stanford University and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. By 1990 the combined legacies were worth more than \$90 million.

In 1991 the Church had already spent all its unrestricted funds on the new cable channel. After refusing to rise to Knapp’s bait for more than thirty years, the Church published the book. Nothing has ever rocked the foundations of Christian Science as did the publication of Knapp’s *Destiny of the Mother Church*. The publication preceded by just a few months *The Boston Globe*’s disclosure, which was news to most Church members, that many millions of dollars had been spent on media expansion and the pension fund had been borrowed from—a matter that, though not illegal, was viewed by many of

the faithful as immoral. The publication of Bliss Knapp’s book was seen by many members as a transparently venal attempt to grab a windfall that might impede the Church’s financial collapse. What’s more (and what was even worse to many members), the Church, in granting its imprimatur to Knapp’s beliefs by publishing his book as authorized literature, had tainted the religion’s hard-won status as a Christian faith and handed the enemies of Christian Science all the ammunition they needed to brand it a cult.

A number of Church workers resigned over the publication of Knapp’s book, including all four senior editors of the Church’s religious periodicals, and others were fired when they refused to support the book publicly. Hundreds of branch churches refused to sell it in their reading rooms. A group of members filed suit early last year in Massachusetts against the directors and other Church officials who were responsible both for the book’s publication and for the media ventures, charging them with violating Eddy’s *Manual of the Mother Church*, which is the Church’s legal governing document. What seemed like a minor theological squabble to outsiders was like an earthquake inside the Church.

The directors of the Church—who claim to this day that they did not publish the book for the money—had apparently despised and feared the influence of Bliss Knapp before their about-face in 1991. In 1987, while working on a TV documentary about the life of Mary Baker Eddy, Church members asked the actor Robert Duvall—who was raised as a Christian

Scientist and graduated from Principia—to provide the narration. When the directors learned of this, they at first refused to approve him, solely because Duvall's parents had studied Christian Science with Bliss Knapp. (I have heard such students called "Knappers" by other Christian Scientists). Eventually, Gottschalk says, the directors relented and used Duvall when no other suitable narrator could be found.

I could not understand how Bliss Knapp and his book-publication bribery had become an issue so overwhelming to Church members that they considered it more important than what members call "the child cases." Why, I asked Gottschalk, didn't the prosecution of Christian Science parents inspire the letter-writing campaigns, the organized protest, and the outcry within the Church that the Knapp book has?

At this Gottschalk grew uncomfortable, sighing and shifting in his chair. It seemed to me that Gottschalk, an involved and affectionate father, would never neglect the well-being of his own children. But he is firmly opposed to any legal restrictions on the right of Christian Science parents to treat their children with prayer alone. Having been a member of the Committee on Publication during many of the recent court cases that have involved children, he is aware of the disturbing facts, but he has never used his considerable knowledge and reputation to protest the Church's defense of parents' actions. Instead he has devoted himself to protesting other questionable Church actions. He is a driving force behind a group calling itself The Mailing Fund, which distributes voluminous updates on (among other things) dissenters' efforts to get the Church to renounce the Knapp book, and he has served as an unpaid consultant to the alternative beneficiaries of the bequest, to whom the court ended up awarding a percentage of the Knapp millions.

After I pressed him about the issue of children in the Church, Gottschalk burst out, "These are the questions that should have been asked! Fine! There's a role for media in the Church, but the issues that most needed thinking about were largely ignored. There's been a decade of avoiding the hard questions—How can we develop an honest and constructive dialogue with society? How can ethics and the practice of healing be improved? How can we do better what we say we do? There have been many serious child cases. . . ." And then he broke off, unwilling to say anything else on the record.

Apparently, even for Steve Gottschalk, some things are simply unmentionable.

The Suffering of Children

WE both knew what they were. The illnesses and deaths of Christian Science children—and adults—are not only frequently senseless, they are often shockingly grotesque. It is heartbreaking to see children in hospital beds, suffering from cancer or leukemia. But ill and frightened though they are, such children at least have adults

to minister to their physical and emotional needs with medical care, pain-killers, counseling, and empathy. Imagine those children at home, being told by their parents that their illness is not real and that the pain they feel is not a part of the real world—God's world. Imagine yourself at six or nine or twelve being very sick and hearing your parents read to you Eddy's definition of man, which begins, "Man is not matter; he is not made up of brain, blood, bones, and other material elements." Imagine what happens to a child when her cancer goes untreated for months. And then imagine how it feels.

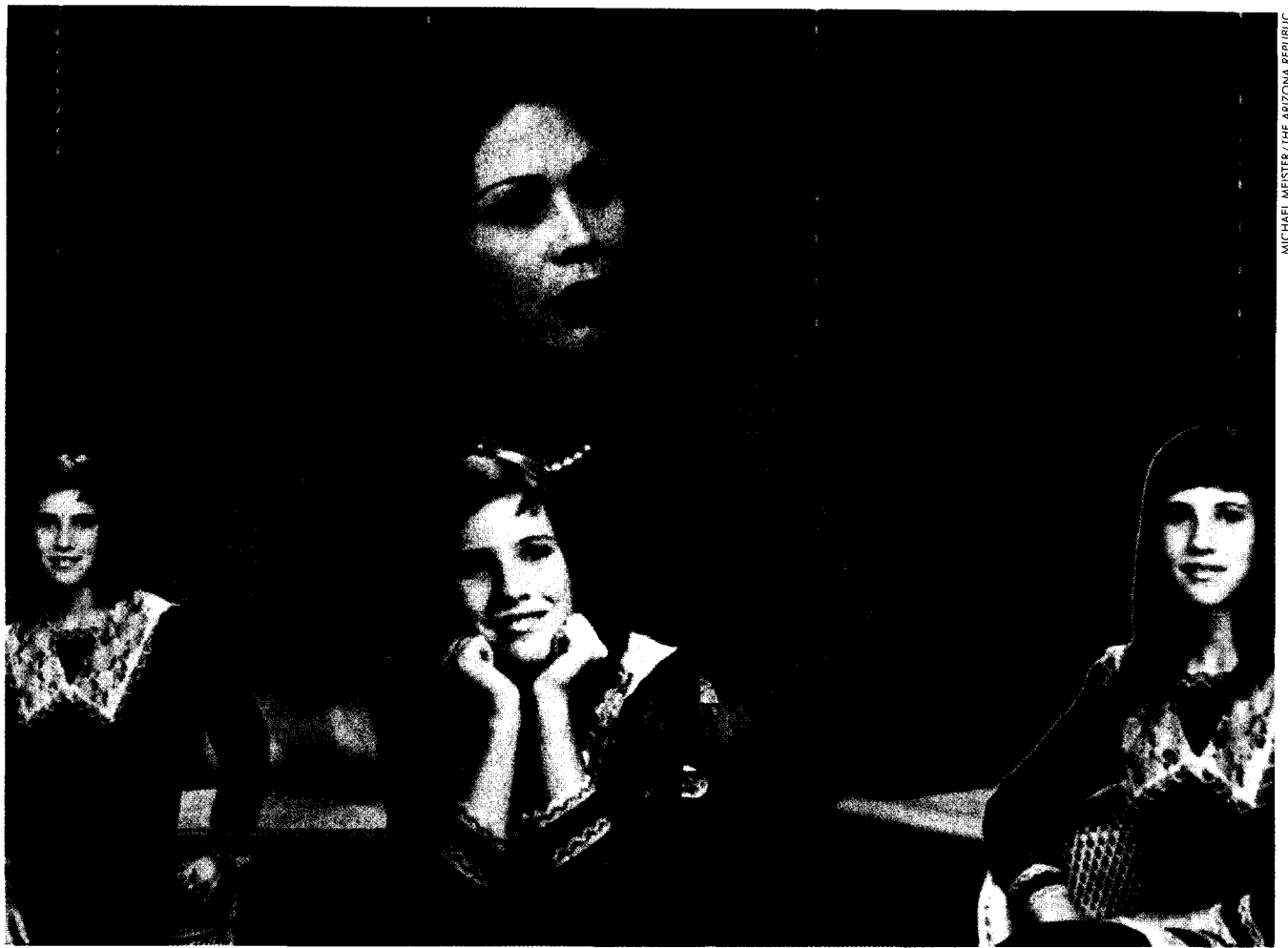
If you can bear to imagine that, you will be imagining what actually happened to Ashley King. Ashley King died in 1988. She was twelve years old, and she had bone cancer. The only child of John King, a real-estate executive in Phoenix, Arizona, and his wife, Catherine, both Christian Scientists, she was withdrawn from school in November of 1987 because of "a problem with her leg." Officials at Copah Middle School, in Scottsdale, agreed to arrange for Ashley's teacher, Tammy Van Denberg, to see her at home.

According to court records, in February of 1988 Van Denberg came to the Kings' home for a visit but was not allowed to see Ashley. She kept coming, hoping to see the child. Catherine King repeatedly reassured her until, in April, she met Van Denberg at the door and said, "We finally have come to the point where you place God before your own life." School authorities called Child Protective Services.

On May 5 Detective Edwin Boehm, of the Paradise Valley Police Department, came to the house; he believes himself to have been the first person other than her parents to see Ashley in months. When I reached Boehm recently and asked him if he remembered Ashley King, he said, "You work on a case like that, you don't forget it." He said it had taken some time before he "gained entry," because Catherine King at first refused to answer the door. He described seeing Ashley: "I knew first thing looking at her that she was dying." He couldn't see her leg, because "she had a pillow on it under the covers—she was hiding it." He would eventually tell a grand jury, "She was extremely white, ashen colored—to be specific, death color." The next day Child Protective Services received a court order allowing them temporary custody of Ashley for the purpose of medical examination.

Judging by photographs taken a year or so before her death, Ashley King was a beautiful girl, with long, straight dark-brown hair and high cheekbones. When she was taken to Phoenix Children's Hospital, she had a tumor on her right leg that was forty-one inches in circumference.

Her hemoglobin count, according to Paul Baranko, the physician who examined her, was "almost incompatible with life." Her heart was enlarged from the burden of pumping blood to the tumor, her pulse was twice normal, the cancer had spread to her lungs, and she was in immediate danger of dying from congestive heart failure. Immobilized by the tumor, she had been lying in the same position for months. Her buttocks and genitals were covered with bedsores.



MICHAEL WEISTER / THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Nurses who testified before the grand jury said that Ashley had told them, "I'm in so much pain" and "You don't know how I have suffered." Baranko, who estimated that Ashley would have had a 55 to 60 percent chance of recovery if she had had timely, proper medical treatment, recommended that her leg be amputated to reduce her pain in the time she had remaining; the Kings declined. He later said, "This has to be the most disturbing, depressing case I have ever seen in my twenty-five years as a physician."

Ashley stayed in the hospital for only six days. Officials with Child Protective Services reached an agreement with her parents whereby Ashley would be transferred to Upward View, a Christian Science nursing home. At Upward View, a facility that was not state-licensed and was staffed by Christian Science nurses, who provide only nonmedical care, Ashley lay in bed in conditions that must have been similar to those she had endured at home. When she cried out, a nurse

reminded her to remember the feelings of the other "visitors." She died on June 5, 1988.

Two months later her parents were indicted on charges of child abuse and negligent homicide (the negligent-homicide

charges were dropped in a second grand-jury hearing), and Nathan Talbot came to their defense. The Church took the position, as it always has, that children die in hospitals, too. This is true. The difference—that children who die in hospitals have the benefit of something other than the words of Mary Baker Eddy ringing in their ears—does not figure in the Church's logic.

Seven years later the deputy county attorney who handled the prosecution of the Kings, K. C. Scull, is still angry. "It was a shocking case," he told me recently. "The tumor—it was absolutely humongous, the size of a watermelon. You've just never seen anything like that on a human being. It was absolutely bizarre. I spent a fair amount of time with Nathan Talbot—I flew out to Boston and met with him for a full day, trying to figure out what to do with the case. And I came away from there stunned that Nathan Talbot believed that you can heal *anything* with this prayerlike procedure. He really takes it literally, and so did these people."

Scull is particularly scathing about Talbot's motives for wanting to appear before the grand jury that indicted the Kings: "If there's a bad guy here, it's the Church. I really resented a guy like Nathan Talbot coming in. When I saw him, I thought, He doesn't care about these people; he cares about the Christian Science Church. It's obviously in serious de-

Catherine King, displaying enlarged photographs of her daughter, Ashley, talks to reporters after her sentencing

cline, and he knows it. And he can't turn it around. He and the Church are doing dangerous things. I got a sense that the Kings were willing to make martyrs of themselves, and I think the Church pushed these people. Nathan Talbot was out here more than once."

The year 1988 was a busy time for Nathan Talbot. Six separate trials of Christian Scientists charged with child abuse, negligence, or manslaughter were pending that year, and Talbot flew from one trial to the next, speaking softly into the outstretched microphones of the press. He appeared on *60 Minutes* and *Nightline*. A tall, good-looking man with an unctuous manner that enrages prosecutors, he never loses control. I have been watching him for several years now, on television and at the Church's annual national meeting, and I have never seen him excited, not even when members of his own Church are shouting at him. I asked someone who knows Talbot about this preternatural calm, and he told me that when Talbot gets angry, his hands clench and turn white.

In 1989, a year after their indictment. John and Catherine King each pleaded no contest to one charge of reckless endangerment—a misdemeanor in this case. After their sentencing to three years' probation, the couple held a press conference at which Catherine King displayed a number of large cardboard cutouts of her daughter, which she had made out of enlarged photographs. She told reporters that her daughter had been terrified not by her disease or her pain but by the doctors who examined her: "The only analogy I can use to describe the terror, resistance, and sense of injustice Ashley felt is to compare it to what it must have been like for Anne Frank to be taken to the prison camp in Nazi Germany." King also said, "I know I was a good mother, and no judge or jury in the country can convince me otherwise."

"I Am God's Perfect Child"

MY own mother was a late convert to Christian Science. She married a man who had been a Christian Scientist all his life, and, although she did not join the Church for many years, she obediently followed him to church every Sunday and Wednesday. She put on a compliant face and never openly questioned my father's beliefs, raising us children to be churchgoing, *Science and Health*-reading "Scientists." But underneath I know she was a skeptic. In the pocket of an old raincoat in the hall closet she kept a bottle of orange-flavored children's aspirin. Whenever I seemed to be running a fever, she would surreptitiously extract a couple of tablets and slip them to me, warning me to keep quiet about it.

Memories of childhood are necessarily subjective, and although my parents loved their children and were generally responsible, the power of Christian Science to alter or distort normal parental impulses colored my childhood. The strangeness of our lives did not strike me until I was much

older and began to see how other people lived. Before I went to high school, nearly everyone I knew well, except for my mother's family, was a Christian Scientist. The first inkling I had of how other people felt about my beliefs was when I tried to explain to my high school boyfriend, who was Jewish, what Christian Science was all about. He burst out laughing and said, "You don't really believe that, do you?"

I did. When I was little and got carsick, I prayed frantically, saying over and over to myself, "I am God's perfect child, I am God's perfect child." I thought that if I repeated it fast enough and often enough, I would feel better. I was afraid to admit to feeling ill, because even when I was four or five, I knew that my father viewed sickness as a sign of weakness, of sin, of disobedience. When I threw up in the back seat, as I always did, my father would berate me, yelling over his shoulder, "You're going to have to learn not to do that!" My father was a particularly zealous Christian Scientist, but young Christian Science children, who have little choice but to believe what their parents are telling them, are taught that illness originates in errors in their parents' and eventually their own thinking. So for them sickness becomes an experience of self-doubt, anxiety, and shame. In *Science and Health*, Eddy acknowledged that very young children must be treated by their parents ("If the case is that of a young child or an infant, it needs to be met mainly through the parent's thought"), but she also suggested that young children were capable of taking care of themselves ("Children should be taught the Truth-cure, Christian Science, among their first lessons. . . . This makes Christian Science early available"). The Church's religious periodicals regularly publish children's own accounts of illnesses they have been allowed to treat themselves.

Christian Scientists not only don't like to acknowledge illness; they don't like to see it. On occasion I was sent to my room from the dinner table for sneezing or coughing; I now know that I was allergic to our cat. Mark Twain, who thought Mary Baker Eddy was a charlatan, was so outraged by the illogic of Christian Science that he wrote a book, *Christian Science*, about it. It opens with a send-up of the idea, still current among Christian Science practitioners, that they can cure *in absentia*, without laying eyes on their patients and without even knowing what's wrong with them.

This last summer, when I was on my way back to Vienna from the Appetite-Cure in the mountains, I fell over a cliff in the twilight and broke some arms and legs and one thing or another, and by good luck was found by some peasants who had lost an ass, and they carried me to the nearest habitation. . . .

It was remembered that a lady from Boston was summering in that village, and she was a Christian Science doctor and could cure anything. So she was sent for. It was night by this time, and she could not conveniently come, but sent word that it was no matter, there was no hurry, she would give me "absent treatment" now, and come in the

morning; meantime she begged me to make myself tranquil and comfortable and remember that there was nothing the matter with me. I thought there must be some mistake.

Unfortunately, this scenario is not as improbable as it sounds. In his 1991 memoir, *The Unseen Shore: Memories of a Christian Science Childhood*, Thomas Simmons describes his mother's dying in a Christian Science care home: "The Christian Science practitioner who prayed for my mother came infrequently, preferring to offer her prayers by telephone. When she did come, she arrived like a small whirlwind, asking my mother why she was not up and around, why she had not eaten, why she did not get dressed." In a 1984 editorial that he wrote for the *Christian Science Sentinel*, Allison Phinney Jr. claimed, "Christian Science is not naively unaware of the human condition. It doesn't, contrary to deliberately misleading depiction, inculcate blind optimism but fosters independent thought, understanding, and reasonable caring for human needs." But it doesn't seem deliberately misleading to me to describe the treatment of Thomas Simmons's mother—or of Ashley King—as grossly inconsistent with reasonable caring for human needs.

Spalding Gray, who was raised as a Christian Scientist, has also written about the bizarre unflappability that the religion instills in its followers. There are several passages in his book *Sex and Death to the Age Fourteen* that capture the experience of growing up as a Christian Scientist. This is one of them:

So one day I was in the bathtub taking a very hot bath. It was a cold day and the radiator was going full blast. I got out of the tub. . . . I hit my head on the sink. . . . When I landed my arm fell against the radiator. I must have been out quite a long time because when I came to, I lifted my arm up and it was like this dripping-rare-red roast beef, third-degree burn. Actually it didn't hurt at all because I was in shock, a steam burn on my finger would have hurt more. I ran downstairs and showed it to my mother and she said, "Put some soap in it, dear, and wrap it in gauze." She was a Christian Scientist, so she had a distance on those things.

The next day when I got to school, the burn began to drip through the gauze. I went down to the infirmary, and when the nurse saw it she screamed, "What, you haven't been to a doctor with this? That's a third-degree burn. You've got to get to a doctor right away." So I went back home and told my mother what the nurse had said, and my mother said, "Well, it's your choice, dear. It's your choice."

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That infuriating, smug calm in the face of crisis is part of what makes Christian Science so dangerous. Fixated on their rote readings and prayers, Christian Science parents and practitioners are apt to be unmoved by the visible signs of any disease or accident. I remember the hypnotic voice of the practitioner my mother phoned to talk to me when I was sixteen and had a fever so high that I had been delirious; the practitioner was interested in hearing not how I felt but what I had been studying in *Science and Health*.

This obliviousness of the reality of pain and suffering has been documented in trial after trial. The testimony of Nancy Calkins, the practitioner who treated Robyn Twitchell, shows that Calkins was obsessed with keeping Robyn's frantic mother calm moments before Robyn died. "Let's just be calm here and take this a step at a time . . . we're seeing good here. Let's just keep calm," she told Ginger Twitchell. And after she pointed out to Robyn's parents that their child had just died in their arms—or, as she put it,

"passed"—she was intent not on acknowledging Robyn's mother's grief but on moderating and containing it. "Ginger, she just went out of control. She just lost it. She went hysterical. She got devastated. She screamed, 'No, no. No, no.' . . . I really had to work so much to know that she wasn't going to go off the deep end right then and there."

I am certain it was that same complacency that killed a child I knew, Michael Schram, whose appendix burst when he was twelve. His mother, Betty, whom I remember as a very kind, quiet woman, patient with children, sat calmly on their couch with him the night he died and, apparently just as calmly, sat beside his dead body for two and a half days, praying, she later told the local paper, with "the idea of rousing him."

I had been at college only a couple of weeks when Michael died, and my mother called to tell me about it, pulling the phone into the laundry room and whispering so that my father couldn't hear her. My mother sent me newspaper clippings about his death, about a bomb threat to my parents' church, and about the Seattle prosecutor's decision not to indict Betty Schram for manslaughter. The year before I left home, I had enraged my father and made my mother miserable by refusing to go to church with them, but she had secretly enjoyed my defiance and seemed to be vicariously taking part in it. I was the youngest, and when I went away to college I was anxious about leaving her in the care of the *Science and Health*, always kept with the Bible on an old crocheted doily next to the couch. I don't think I knew what I was afraid of, exactly, but I was right to be worried.

The Only Thing That Matters More Than What They Think —

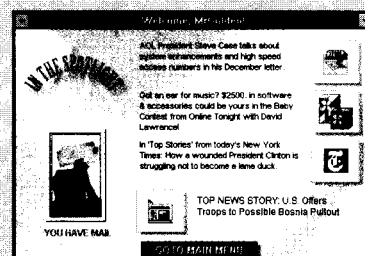
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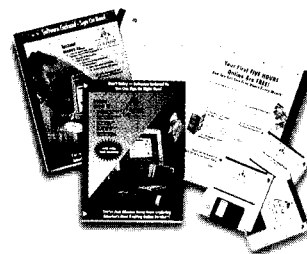
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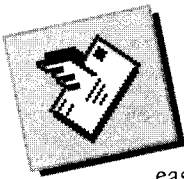
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USABILITY

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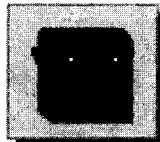
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Shortly after I left home, my mother finally joined the Christian Science Church. She told me she wanted to be able to volunteer to watch the babies in the church nursery on Sundays. Three or four years ago, when my mother was in her early sixties, my brother and sister and I began to realize that something was wrong with her. Once a sharp and alert woman, who had taught in the public schools for many years, she seemed to be forgetting how to speak the English language. She couldn't remember the words for things; she couldn't keep her pronouns straight. Whenever we spoke to her on the phone, my father, in the background, yelled out the words she couldn't remember.

When we discussed this among ourselves, my siblings and I could never decide whether we were exaggerating her symptoms, whether they were signs of a mental or a physiological problem or both, whether we should do anything, and if we were to do something, what it would be. We were in the classic bind of the lapsed children of Christian Scientists: we wanted to save our parents from themselves.

Most people think of cults as groups that are populated largely by the young, the unattached, the vulnerable; countless stories have appeared in the popular press of concerned parents' attempts to "deprogram" their children. But Christian Science turns all the clichés about cults upside down. It is a cult that has become old and respectable, and the children who are lucky enough to grow up and break away from it are faced with the prospect of watching their parents suffer unnecessarily and die before their time.

Spalding Gray has written extensively about his mother, a Christian Scientist who was also a manic-depressive: not a good combination. Although her husband (not a Christian Scientist) did get psychiatric help for her, she eventually succeeded in killing herself. Gray's autobiographical novel *Impossible Vacation* captures both the absurdity and the tragedy of the situations that Christian Scientists create for themselves. It describes his doomed attempts to woo his mother back to reality.

I clearly saw, once again, how like a sky hook that wasn't there when she needed it, the Christian Science wasn't working for Mom. It was one of those pull-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps situations, but there were no more bootstraps. One part of the mind has to be the bootstraps for the other part, and all parts of Mom's mind seemed to have gone.

Christian Science isn't working for my mother either. Being a Christian Scientist is an education in what life must have been like in the centuries before medical science discovered antibiotics, penicillin, the art of diagnosis. H. R. Haldeman's son Peter wrote recently in *The New York Times Magazine* about his father's death, in 1993, of an undiagnosed, untreated stomach ailment. Some years ago, when my father collapsed in the middle of the night, we didn't know what was the matter with him, and we never found out. My mother momentar-

ily believed he was dead. Now we don't know if my mother has Alzheimer's disease or some form of treatable, reversible dementia, or whether she is simply severely depressed. We may never know. She has declined all offers of medical care and has chosen to rely on Christian Science. When we ask her how she is, she says, brightly, "Fine!" She has her good days and her bad days, and I still talk to her. But in some important way I feel that I will never truly see her again.

Two Mothers Protest

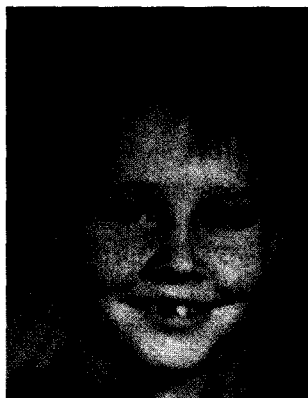
NOT every Christian Science mother has toed the line when faced with a choice between obeying her Church and saving her child. Two women—one who lost a child under Christian Science treatment, and another who saved hers at the last minute with medical care—have attacked the Church's position on the incompatibility of medicine and prayer, and their campaigns have begun to take a toll.

Rita Swan was a Christian Scientist until she left the Church, in 1977, after her sixteen-month-old son, Matthew, died of bacterial meningitis under Christian Science treatment. She has dogged it ever since, tangling with Nathan Talbot on a number of occasions. Gottschalk, who will not talk on the record about the details of any of the child cases that the committee handled while he worked there, is willing to describe Swan—the most outspoken critic of the Church's record on children—in vivid terms. At my first meeting with Gottschalk he shook his head when I asked him about her, saying that her view was "too dark, too bitter." And in a later conversation he said, "Her arguments and statistics are often very twisted. She doesn't want to admit that healing actually works. She's really a sad woman."

"Bitter" and "sad" do not seem inappropriate emotional states given Rita Swan's experience. She and her husband prayed over their son for days, employing two successive Christian Science practitioners; she listened to the baby screaming and watched him convulsing for hours before he died. After she finally threw off a lifetime of warnings against doctors, disregarded the importuning of the practitioner, and took Matthew to a hospital, she learned that his illness could have been treated with antibiotics.

In 1983 Swan and her husband founded CHILD (Children's Healthcare Is a Legal Duty), an organization that documents the deaths of children and adults in all religious sects that discourage medical care. Among Christian Science children alone she has found deaths within the past twenty years from meningitis, diabetes, diphtheria, measles, kidney infection, septicemia, cancer, and appendicitis; she has found outbreaks of polio and measles at Christian Science camps and schools; she has interviewed adults who, because of diseases and injuries that went untreated during childhood, became profoundly deaf, or lame, or suffered permanent organ damage.

Finding these cases is not easy. Unless a coroner rules them homicides or criminal charges are filed, the deaths may not be brought to the attention of the media and the public. Swan documented one case of a Christian Science child whose experience may have been very much like that of Ashley King—thirteen-year-old Kris Ann Lewin, who in 1981 died at home of bone cancer after an illness lasting at least a year. But the full story of what happened to Kris Ann Lewin may never be known; Child Protective Services in Pennsylvania, the state where she died, was required to destroy her records because child abuse couldn't be proved.



Swan has worked relentlessly to publicize the plight of these children and to persuade state legislatures to overturn the religious exemptions in their laws. So far only Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, and South Dakota (where five infants in Sioux Falls died in the 1980s during the unattended births of women who belonged to the sect End Time Ministries) have overturned them. Courts have criticized legislatures for maintaining these confusing and misleading exemptions; in 1992 the Florida Supreme Court overturned the child-abuse convictions of two Christian Scientists who had allowed their seven-year-old daughter to die of diabetes after a long, wasting illness, find-



ing that "a person of ordinary intelligence cannot be expected to understand the extent to which reliance on spiritual healing is permitted and the point at which this reliance constitutes a criminal offense. . . . The statutes have created a trap that the legislature should address." In 1993, a few months after the Massachusetts Supreme Court overturned the manslaughter convictions of David and Ginger Twitchell, that state's legislature eliminated its ambiguous religious exemption.

As Rita Swan has found, this is something that state and federal legislators, pressured by lobbyists for the Christian Science Church and fearful of being labeled intolerant, are reluctant to do. In September of last year the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Church lobbyists, working with two U.S. representatives with connections to Christian Science,

(Lamar Smith, of Texas, is a Christian Scientist, and John Porter, of Illinois, was raised as one), managed to ensure the insertion into the year's largest appropriations bill of a provision blocking the Department of Health and Human Services from denying some financial aid to states that flourish on demand that parents provide medical care for children. The *Times* quoted one lobbyist as saying, "Members [of Congress] see religious freedom and they want to go with religious freedom." Asked about Swan's research, which has turned up at least 165 children who have died since 1975 because medical care was withheld for religious reasons, Phil Davis, the head of the Church's lobbying office in Washington, D.C., described the figure as "a handful."

Recently Swan has focused her energies on a new method by which to compel the Church and its members to realize that their "radical reliance" on Christian Science when it comes to children is unwise. Swan and her husband filed a civil suit against the Church in the early 1980s, but it was thrown out of court. Last August, however, CHILD and a New Hampshire man, Steven Brown, whose two daughters live with their Christian Scientist mother in Cincinnati, Ohio, filed suit in federal court, asking that Ohio's religious-exemption law be declared unconstitutional.

Swan has also supported other unprecedented civil suits that have been filed against the Church. In 1993 Douglass Lundman, a divorced father, sued his ex-wife and the Christian Science Church for allowing his eleven-year-old son, Ian, to die of diabetes in 1989. A jury in suburban Minneapolis heard how Ian's mother had lied to Lundman only a few hours before Ian's death, when Lundman, who had not even been informed of the gravity of his son's illness, called and asked to speak to him. She told him Ian was sleeping. He was actually in the diabetic coma from which he never awoke. He had been ill for four days—losing 35 percent of his body weight—and had been vomiting and urinating uncontrollably before falling into the coma. In August of 1993 the jury held Ian's mother, Kathleen McKown, partly responsible for his death and awarded Lundman damages of more than \$5 million, to be paid by McKown, her husband, the Christian Science practitioner who treated Ian, the Christian Science nursing home that provided his nurse, the local representative of the Committee on Publication, and the Church itself. Several days later the jury decided that the Church alone should pay an additional \$9 million in punitive damages. The compensatory damages awarded to Douglass Lundman were recently reduced

by an appeals court to \$1.5 million, but the court declined to lower the punitive damages against the Church. (The Church is appealing the decision.)

The Lundman deci-

The deaths from diabetes of Ian Lundman (top) and Andrew Wantland led to lawsuits. Right: Ginger and David Twitchell, who were prosecuted after the death of their son, confer with lawyers.

sion is a staggering blow to the Church—the most damaging it has ever suffered, worse than the millions lost on the media ventures, worse than the near schism caused by the furor over Bliss Knapp's book. Rita Swan hopes that even if the Church cannot be persuaded that the deaths that have followed when members have chosen to forsake conventional medical attention are unnecessary and immoral, further deaths can be made simply too expensive for the institution or its members to tolerate. The Lundman decision has paved the way for similar civil suits, which could conceivably be filed by any close relative of a child who dies under Christian Science treatment. Andrew Wantland died of diabetes under circumstances much like those surrounding the death of Ian Lundman; Andrew's mother filed her civil suit after she heard details of the Lundman case.

Suzanne Shepard's Story

SUZANNE Shepard is another waking nightmare for the Church. A graduate of Principia, and a practitioner for thirteen years, Shepard knows in the most intimate way the flimsiness of the Church's claim that it offers an alternative form of health care. In 1987 she watched her six-year-old daughter, Marilyn, lapse into a coma, and asked herself if she wanted "to be a good Christian Scientist and not have a daughter, or be a bad Christian Scientist and have a daughter." Against the wishes of her practitioner, and followed by two Christian Science friends who hoped to talk her out of her decision, Shepard drove her daughter to St. Louis Children's Hospital and saved her life; Marilyn had appendicitis and peritonitis. In the hospital Shepard called her practitioner and asked him to continue praying. She says he refused, telling her to "take Marilyn home, because it was better that she die." Shepard says, "He said that if she lived, her next healing would be more difficult, because she would not be able to understand Christian Science."

Shepard came out of this experience convinced that prayer could be combined with medicine, and she began in a small way to try to reform the Church from within. In 1993, after Aaron Witte, the child of one of Shepard's Christian Science friends, died of diabetes the day before his thirteenth birthday, she took her story to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

The experiences with her family and as a practitioner which she described for that newspaper—and subsequently expanded on for me—verge on Grand Guignol. A fourth-generation Christian Scientist, Shepard has seen many members of her family die prematurely and terribly. Her mother died at age fifty of untreated cervical cancer; her stepmother died of a melanoma on her chest which metastasized; her

grandfather developed a melanoma on his cheek which ate completely through the flesh. As a teenager, she was paralyzed for several weeks after fracturing two vertebrae in her neck; her right side is still affected because she didn't go to a doctor until years after the injury. She told me, "You can't imagine the human torture and neglect of watching someone die without any pain-killers. It's very abusive and very sad."

Telling me about her work as a practitioner, Shepard had to stop twice to compose herself. "I know that no one actually died when I was praying for them," she said. "But I



JANET KNOTT/THE BOSTON GLOBE

know that people suffered terribly and had malformations as a result of having no medical treatment, especially in the cases of cuts, deep wounds, and burns." She remembers two children in particular. The parents of a six-year-old girl called to ask her to pray for the child because she had fallen and bruised her arm. The girl herself later called Shepard, crying uncontrollably. Shepard drove to her home and found her alone, lying on the floor with a protruding broken collarbone. Her parents had gone to work and left her on the floor with the telephone. On another occasion a mother called and described her child as having a sore throat. Three days later Shepard visited the child and found that he had swallowed lye and had a hole in his throat.

Shepard refused to recant what she had told the *Post-Dispatch*, and in 1993 her local church kicked her out. It is hard to tell which frightens the Church leadership more: the publicity Shepard has generated or the reasonableness of her position. As Church authorities well know, she is not the first to suggest that prayer and medicine can be combined in the Christian Science faith. Mary Baker Eddy was.

As everyone from Mark Twain to the police detective who investigated the case of Ashley King has noticed, Christian Scientists wear eyeglasses, go to dentists, use canes. Mary Baker Eddy suggested that Church members who did not

find healing through her methods might go to a doctor. She herself did. Robert Peel, who wrote the definitive biography of Eddy, documented her use of morphine to ease the pain of kidney stones. Bliss Knapp is not the only Christian Scientist to have engaged in revisionism.

A year and a half ago, when I began investigating the controversies discussed in this article, I got in touch with Nathan Talbot and Victor Westberg to ask for their responses—indeed, for any statement about the Church's position on the treatment of children or on any of the child cases. Talbot refused to comment, saying that he is now devoting himself to the Church's "healing ministry." Westberg, whose job, in the words of Mary Baker Eddy, is "to correct in a Christian manner impositions on the public in regard to Christian Science," turned down all my requests made at that time to interview him, citing the Church's ongoing litigation. No official directly involved in the Church's policies on the child cases would agree to be interviewed.

Directors of the Church have given interviews to the press when it suits them. Virginia Harris, the chairwoman of the board, recently completed a twelve-city promotional tour, publicizing the Church's new trade edition of *Science and Health*. She has given interviews to *The New York Times*, among other publications. In 1993 Westberg told me that the directors had "a long-standing policy" against talking to the press, and one of his deputies, Michael Born, when I asked him insistently about the recently announced decision in the Lundman case, told me, in a tone I would not describe as Christian, that I wasn't writing a history book and didn't need to revisit all this old history. As Steve Gottschalk once said to me, repeating what his friend Robert Peel had told him in reference to the Knapp issue, "The hardest impositions to correct are the ones that are true."

But when Westberg learned recently that this article was about to be published, he suddenly decided that it was time to talk to me. In a conversation that reminded me at times of one of my old Sunday school classes, Westberg declined again to address any of the child cases specifically and insisted that the Committee on Publication does not involve itself in advising parents on how to treat their children: "When we have parents who do call us, we will refer them to practitioners. . . . When it comes to a parent's decision, it's strictly up to the parent." When I asked him if the committee ever talked with concerned parents about their legal rights in their own state, he said, "I don't think we can do that. Their divine rights are what we certainly remind them of—not necessarily their legal rights but their divine rights, and that's usually sufficient to heal a case." In contrast to his formerly gruff manner, Westberg was friendly, even avuncular, but his comments brought back to me the feeling that Christian Scientists seem to occupy a universe of their own. When I asked him for the names of any practitioners he knew who had ever followed Eddy's suggestion in the *Manual* that they might "consult with an M.D." on cases they failed

to heal, he replied gravely, "One that comes to mind—it would be very difficult to contact him. He has passed on."

A Child's Right to Live

PRAYER is a resource for millions of people, and medical studies have shown that it can benefit the seriously and even the terminally ill. No one would argue with the Christian Scientist's right to religious freedom, but the unnecessary deaths of Christian Science children raise pressing questions about the conflict between an adult's right to practice his or her religion and a child's right to live.

The dogmatic reaction of the Church in many of these cases is particularly puzzling in light of the reality that most Christian Scientists strike a balance between their faith and their children's welfare. Christian Scientists willingly obey this country's laws requiring the presence of a physician or a licensed midwife during childbirth; some have cesarean sections (including the Christian Science mother in Florida who was tried for the death of her daughter). My own recollections and interviews with those currently practicing suggest that some Christian Scientists are willing to have their children vaccinated. Moderate Christian Scientists say, "C.S. stands for Common Sense," and a number of those I interviewed insisted that the individual parent must decide which children's illnesses or injuries can or cannot be "handled in Science." Most Church members support the religious exemptions to the laws but privately question the judgment of those parents who have been compelled to make use of them.

In Great Britain and Canada, countries with no ambiguous religious-exemption laws, Christian Scientists are required, along with everyone else, to provide their children with medical care. But although Christian Scientists in those countries seem to have adapted to that arrangement, it is difficult to find any Christian Scientists in this country who agree that the British system is preferable. I interviewed several eminent American Christian Scientists, distinguished in their respective fields, who calmly and thoughtfully discussed with me the troubling issues raised by the child cases and the conduct of the Church in handling them, but when I later attempted to obtain permission to quote them by name on this subject, they became defensive and declined to be quoted.

Some of these same eminent Christian Scientists have publicly criticized the Church's broadcasting and publishing plans. Why voices like theirs have not been raised within their Church in protest against the agonizing, drawn-out suffering and death endured by Andrew Wantland, Ashley King, and Ian Lundman, among many others, is inexplicable. As it is, if 7,000 children attend Christian Science Sunday schools in this country, then 7,000 children may have nothing standing between themselves and death but the *Science and Health* and dumb luck. ☸



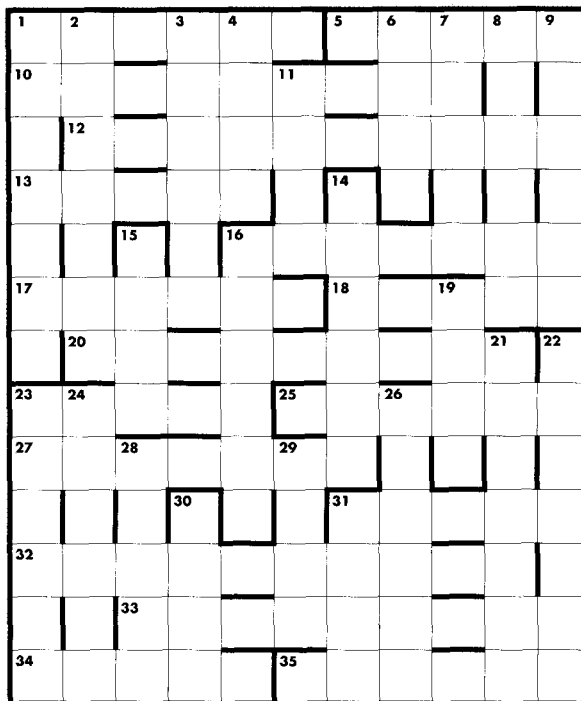
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Smorgasbord

Answers to the six Smorgasbord clues represent dishes to be divided into single-letter helpings; answers to the Across clues represent diners partaking of various helpings. Every diner, upon being seated in the diagram, eats (has inserted into it) at least one helping (letter) from the smorgasbord; some eat as many as three helpings. (If a diner eats from more than one dish, all the helpings are eaten as a group.) Diners form words before *and* after eating. When the diners have finished eating, some leftovers will remain. These leftovers can be mixed together to form a two-word phrase, which is the answer to this month's contest. Downs are normal. Answers include seven capitalized words; Across entries include one proper noun.

See page 137 for Puzzler contest details. The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 136.



Smorgasbord

- a. One clue concerning smorgasbord of appetizers (9)
- b. Begin to eat, swallowing pastry (7) (*two words*)
- c. Head of lettuce put in tossed salad for TV show (6)
- d. Eggs I've scrambled with onions, peppers, and such (7)
- e. Chops covered with cashew sauce (4)
- f. Food like spinach and peanut butter sandwiches remaining (7)

Diners

- 1. Drinks from fifth of alcohol taken by drunkards
- 5. An abundance of milk containers behind auto
- 10. Show up carrying cooking vessel with stewed fruit
- 12. Serving wine in bottles only, initially
- 13. Time our group passing around first of gravy boats
- 16. Father Fitzgerald's seafood dish

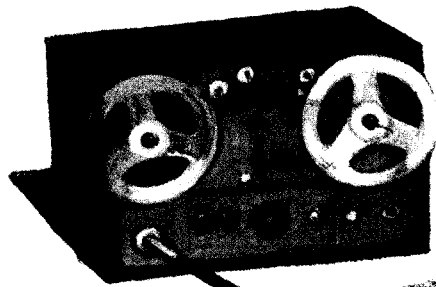
- 17. Container for food captivates one ancient farmer
- 18. After two olives, composer...
- 20. ...having a meal at home gets into earsplitting sound for all ages
- 23. Drinks back salt water with a slice of lemon
- 25. Peel bananas for a soccer superstar
- 27. Run out of fruit side dish
- 31. Bit of butter in small containers
- 32. Tea for each individual escort
- 33. Look for nuggets to taste in cook's room
- 34. Set in front of McMahon, salt and pepper went fast
- 35. Headless fish jerks

Down

- 1. Outside of church, adhere to routine (7)
- 2. Drug addict had hope dashed (7)
- 3. American writer crossing Italian river's farthest point (6)
- 4. Beats Dick and Jane's dog up (4)
- 6. Bismarck base not taking sides (4)
- 7. Desire gripping English composer (5)

- 8. Bean casserole ingredient (6)
- 9. Guys who hand out presents without receiving thanks (6)
- 11. Some grass and a drink (4)
- 14. Steps softly at first on some flooring (6)
- 15. Darkness falling across the village (4)
- 16. Too bad about general's messy quarters (6)
- 19. Fascinated by sort of bean, being penniless? (4)
- 21. Rugged ridges claiming airline's fourth aircraft (7)
- 22. Joey's replacing Old English with Irish cows (7)
- 23. Tips from experts about mixed-up type (6)
- 24. Send over joint pursuant to legal matter (6)
- 26. Young Sonics beaten (6)
- 28. In silence, copy form (5)
- 29. Timeless story before the end of *Gone With the Wind* (4)
- 30. Getting up, siestas are over? (4)
- 31. Almost offensively bold underwear (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.



Pure Roots

*The Smithsonian has reawakened
Folkways Records, a peerless repository of
our native music*

FOR forty years—from its founding, in 1947, to its acquisition by the Smithsonian Institution, in 1987—Folkways Records was, in all its faintly shabby grandeur, a kind of folk-expression museum without walls. Among the nearly 2,200 albums the company issued—the equivalent of one a week for its entire existence—are definitive recordings by many of the greatest folk musicians America has produced (Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, and Pete Seeger are the most famous examples) and also documentation of indigenous music from many countries, spoken-word recordings, nature sounds, sound effects, and political documentaries.

In its last years Folkways languished somewhat, owing to spotty distribution and nonexistent marketing. Since the Smithsonian acquisition, however, the company's legacy has again been made readily available, through what must be one of the most imaginative and intelligently handled cultural-preservation projects ever undertaken.

FOLKWAYS Records was the lengthened shadow of a man named Moses Asch, the son of the Yiddish writer Sholem Asch. Born in Poland in 1905, Asch arrived in the United States when he was ten years old. He spent a few years in Germany in the early 1920s, studying electronics, but by the time he found him-

self back in New York, in 1926, his interest in American folk music had been stirred by his discovery, in a bookstall on a Paris quay, of John Lomax's book *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*. While building radio equipment and arranging sound systems for clients ranging from Yiddish theaters to burlesque houses on the Lower East Side, Asch came up with the idea of creating a record label to

document the music that the larger commercial labels tended to leave alone.

His idea was nourished not only by a love for the music itself but also by a brand of leftist populism in which folk expression was a voice for the disenfranchised. By taste and political conviction Asch was attracted to the raw and the otherwise unheard.

In the early 1940s he started two record companies, Asch and Disc. Both failed. Before folding them Asch recorded his most important artists—the singer and songwriter Woody Guthrie and the great twelve-string guitarist and singer Leadbelly. In 1947 Asch started Folkways, and this time it worked. Until his death, in 1986, Asch was Folkways' president, chief financial officer, talent scout, audio engineer, and sometime shipping clerk. Songs like Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" and "Hard Travelin'," Guthrie's famous collection *Dust Bowl Ballads*, and Leadbelly's "Irene" (later, and better, known as "Goodnight,

Irene"), "Pick a Bale of Cotton," and "Take This Hammer" exemplify Folkways' brand of folk populism. This would directly fuel the folk revival (not to mention the leftist politics) of the early 1960s, as incarnated by singers like Bob

Dylan, Joan Baez, and Phil Ochs, all of whom were profoundly influenced by Folkways artists.

Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly, and Pete Seeger were only the best-known members of what can be thought of as the Asch stock company. Folkways recorded countless lesser-known but significant performers, such as the North Carolina songwriter and guitarist Elizabeth Cotten; the bluesmen Big Bill Broonzy, Brownie McGhee, and Sonny Terry; and the New Lost City Ramblers, a folk-music group that based most of its repertoire on traditional recordings made available by Folkways. Through folklorists and musicologists like Samuel B. Charters, Mike Seeger, and the late Ralph Rinzler, all of whom made recording field trips into rural areas, Asch documented the work of such backcountry virtuosos as the banjoists and singers Dock Boggs, Roscoe Holcomb, Bascom Lamar Lunsford, and Clarence Ashley. In the process Folkways demonstrated the amazing vitality of the country's most unadorned and unadulterated (to Asch, these were synonyms) musical expressions.

Asch was, in fact, a kind of naturalist. He resisted polished performers ("I never permitted a folk-song rehearsal," he once boasted to an interviewer), just as he resisted any kind of recording-studio enhancement, insisting on the simplest recording, using one microphone. He sought out raw, noncommercial, unmediated responses to life's tribulations. Asch himself was never particularly methodical or scholarly in his criteria for what he took into his catalogue; he followed his nose, and it rarely led him astray.

As the company grew, Asch cast his net wider, issuing not only folk music but also spoken-word recordings, music- and language-instruction recordings, background music for home movies, dolphin speech, and anything else that felt right. His haphazard catholicity sometimes made the

Folkways catalogue resemble Charles Foster Kane's warehouse more than a naturalist's museum. He kept up relationships with countless musicologists and anthropologists, who found in Asch the only outlet for their documentation. All the records he issued stayed in print, no matter how few copies they sold. When asked by business-minded friends why he didn't let some slow sellers lapse from the catalogue, he said, "Do you delete the letter Q from the alphabet just because you don't use it as much as the others?"

Folkways was essentially a feudal enterprise. Royalty statements to artists were nonexistent; as often as not, when performers needed money they would go to Asch's office, record a couple of tunes, and walk out with some ready cash. There was no organizational infrastructure; except for one assistant, there was only Asch himself, like an Old Testament God, overseeing his vast creation and dispensing favors capriciously. It was unclear who would, or could, be the steward of the legacy he had amassed. Luckily, Ralph Rinzler, a folk musician and musicologist who recorded many of Folkways' best collections of southern mountain music, was the Smithsonian's assistant secretary for public service when Asch began to think about finding a buyer for his sprawling aural museum.

The Smithsonian, with its resources, access to personnel, and commitment to documenting American music, was in many respects the most sensible place for the catalogue. But the purchase presented several logistical problems, the biggest of which was Asch's insistence that any buyer keep every one of the company's 2,200 recordings available to the public in some form—even the ones that would sell only two copies a year.

The problems were solved in 1987, with the assembling of an all-star benefit album (and, later, video), released by Columbia Records, which featured such heirs of the Folkways tradition as Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Willie Nelson, and members of the rock group U2 performing songs written by Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly. That album, *Folkways: A Vision Shared*, sold more than a quarter of a million copies and raised enough money to enable the Smithsonian to buy Folkways.

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The Atlantic Monthly Online, please see page 12.

You deserve a factual look at...

A Demilitarized Palestinian State Should Israel, should the world rely on it?

Even those most sanguine about the current peace negotiations are agreed that the Palestinian entity to be founded should be demilitarized. A demilitarized "West Bank" and Gaza Strip, it is believed, would do away with any military threat to the state of Israel.

What are the facts?

Israel surrounded by implacable foes. The countries that surround Israel are its deadly enemies. With the exception of Egypt, all other Arab states are still in a declared state of war with Israel. Iran, Moslem though not Arab, lurks in the background, its foremost military and political objective being the destruction of the state of Israel.

The PLO, is a terror organization that has only one purpose: to kill Jews and to

to make blood-curdling speeches to the Arab public, in which they re-assert their old goal of destroying Israel in "stages".

The myth of demilitarization. The assumption that "Palestine" would be demilitarized is not tenable. The Arab nations would not allow it. But mobilization of the "demilitarized" Palestine wouldn't really be required. The weapons of preference of Arab terrorists are the Soviet-made Katyusha rockets, highly effective missiles, truck-mounted and swiftly mobile, ideal for hit-and-run raids

against Israel. A look at the map makes clear that these rockets, short-range though they may be, would literally dominate the heartland of Israel. Easily moved and hidden along Israel's new eastern borders—to be increased from about 40 miles to over 200 miles—they would rain destruction over most of Israel—covering in their entirety Israel's narrow waist that holds 70% of the Jewish population of the country, 80% of its industrial



A Palestinian state—demilitarized? of its industrial base, its only international airport, and its most important military installations.

The Arabs danced on the roofs of their houses when Iraqi Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv during the Gulf War. Since the signing of the "peace agreement" they have continued in unrestrained terror and murder against the Jews—and against each other. Their hatred is undiminished and their avowed intention to destroy Israel has not been forsworn—in fact, it has repeatedly been re-affirmed. Only incurable optimists can believe that an "autonomous" Palestine would wish to become a peaceful neighbor of Israel. If Israel ceded the Gaza Strip—the invasion route since before biblical times—and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to its sworn enemies it would make the country indefensible. Tanks, warplanes, and missiles would only be needed for the final mopping-up process. In the meantime, mortars and Katyushas located on the Judean ridges—Israel's proposed new borders—would suffice to neutralize life and industrial and military activity in Israel.

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THE Smithsonian's first order of business was to reissue a series of Folkways' most important albums as CDs, usually with facsimile covers, including classic albums by Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly, Elizabeth Cotten, Big Bill Broonzy, and many others. The Smithsonian has also assembled and issued several new compilations of material by lesser-known artists such as Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, Dave Van Ronk, and Cisco Houston, and has launched an ambitious series of international folk-music sets.

This in itself would be a substantial achievement, but in the past year or so Smithsonian/Folkways, as the label is now called, has begun issuing previously unissued treasures from the Folkways vaults and also material from other sources, including some startling discoveries. Woody Guthrie's *Long Ways to Travel 1944-1949 (The Unreleased Folkways Masters)*, for example, consists of previously unknown tracks unearthed in the Asch archives. Guthrie had a seemingly inexhaustible facility for putting new words to simple traditional songs—a technique that would later be emulated by his most famous admirer, Bob Dylan. This new disc is a fascinating mélange of nonsense songs, labor songs, talking blues, train songs, and duets with Guthrie's traveling buddy Cisco Houston. Houston, a part-time actor who was one of the mainstays of the Asch stable, had an abnormally smooth voice for an Asch performer, and a polished—even, at times, affectless—delivery. As a walking repository of songs, he had few peers. He also has a disc to himself: Cisco Houston's *The Folkways Years 1944-1961*.

Fans of bluegrass will be stunned by the music on two discs featuring the father of bluegrass, the mandolinist Bill Monroe. *Off the Record Volume 1: Live Recordings 1956-1969* documents late-middle-period performances with Monroe's working band, the Bluegrass Boys, and several stellar guests, including the vocalist Mac Wiseman, the banjo master Don Reno, and the fiddler Tex Logan. The set also includes a segment, recorded at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in 1969, in which the various members of the musical Monroe family reminisce. *Off the Record Volume 2: Live Duet Recordings 1963-1980* is, if anything, even more ex-

citing. Monroe sings and plays with the great guitarist and singer Doc Watson in performances recorded in clubs, at concerts, in a private home, and on the White House lawn, mostly during the mid-1960s. The repertoire is drawn largely from a body of tunes first recorded by Monroe with his brother Charlie in the 1930s, but it also includes a number of other country and bluegrass standards. This is unalloyed roots music of the highest caliber.

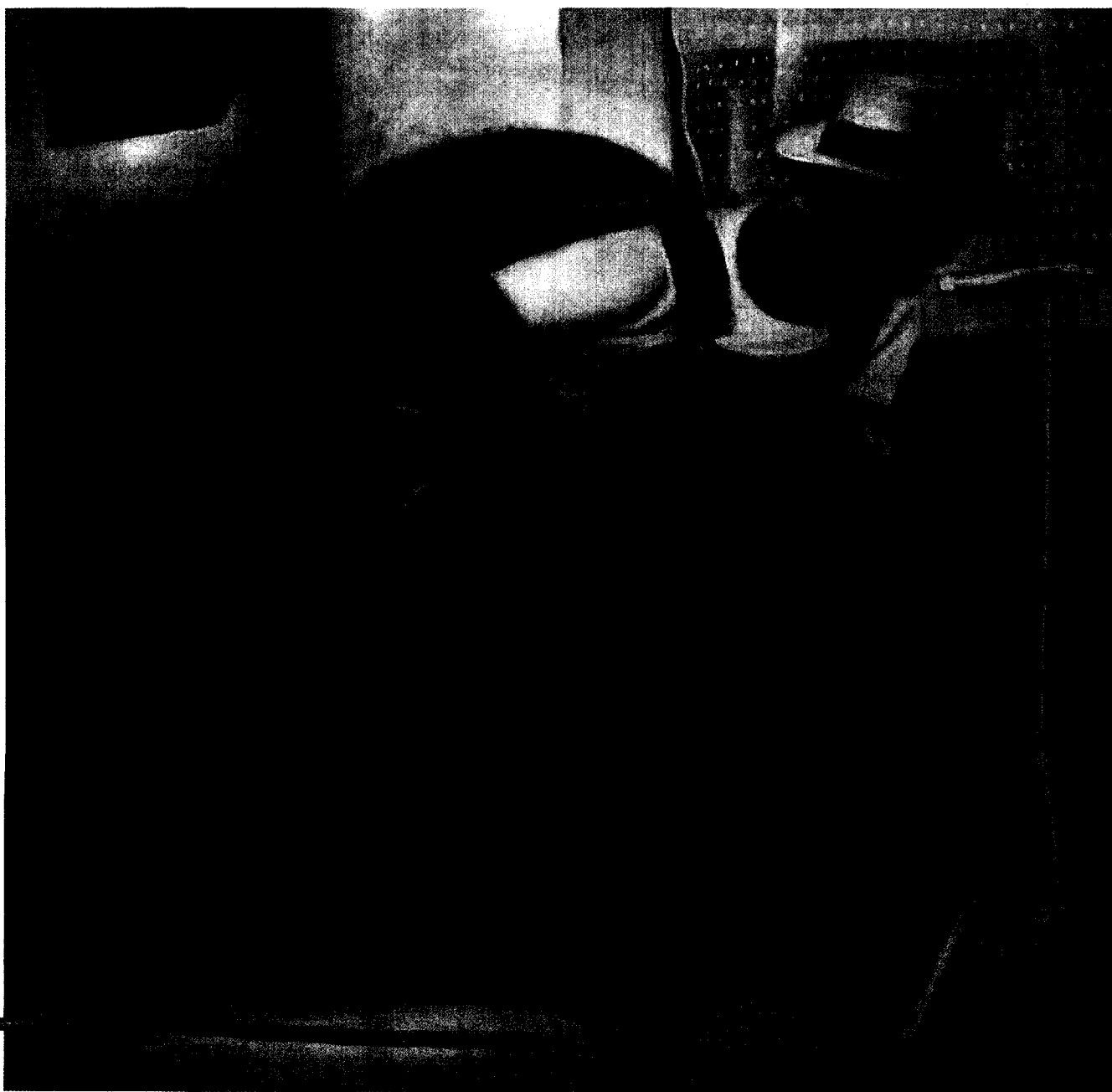
Watson is spotlighted again on *The Original Folkways Recordings of Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley: 1960–1962*, an amazing two-disc compendium of traditional material played and sung by Watson and Ashley, who was once a med-

icine-show performer, and various guests. On the discs a wide spectrum of folk material is compressed through the filter of their unique vocal and instrumental virtuosity. Anyone curious about American traditional country music could start with this set and find himself carried a long way.

Asch reportedly felt that the most important of all his projects was recording Leadbelly. Last fall Smithsonian/Folkways brought out *Leadbelly's Last Sessions*, a monumental four-disc set combining monologues, singing, and guitar playing. The great singer tells how he twice sang his way out of a southern prison, and reminisces at length about a life that was the stuff of legend. The songs

cut a wide swath across genres—blues, work songs and field hollers, children's songs, sentimental tunes, and ballads.

Smithsonian/Folkways' mandate to keep all of the 2,200 Folkways albums in print has been carried out in an ingenious way. By writing or calling Smithsonian/Folkways (414 Hungerford Drive, Suite 444, Rockville, MD 20850; 301-443-2314 or fax 301-443-1819) one can order any Folkways title and receive a high-quality cassette, along with the original descriptive notes, for about \$11. A free copy of *The Whole Folkways Catalogue*, which lists every title, should be ordered first. It is the definitive guide to Asch's bold, eccentric, priceless legacy. ♪





Shoulders and Shanks

Cooking methods that make peasant fare suitable for the holiday table

EVEN though I live mostly on grains and vegetables, sometimes the meaty taste of grilled wild mushrooms or eggplant-tomato casserole isn't enough. Sometimes I just want meat. If I'm going to treat myself to a succulent piece of red meat, it's lamb I choose. Lamb has so much more flavor, bite for bite, than beef that it seems the thriftiest way to spend one's red-meat allowance. My favorite cuts are thrifty too, and showcase the pleasures of both fast roasting, with no liquid at all, and slow braising, with plentiful liquid.

Most people object strongly to a strong lamb flavor, and fear that anything other than a spring lamb will be muttoney. But a pronounced sheepy flavor is now very rare. Size, the traditional way to identify lambs on the verge of becoming mutton (the official turning point is at twelve months), is today an unreliable guide. New

breeds are much fatter at the usual slaughtering age of five to seven months than the old ones were: 80 percent heavier than sheep of the same age were in 1941, according to the American Lamb Council.

"Spring lamb," in any case, has little culinary meaning. Lamb has always been associated with Easter and Passover, probably both for its symbolism and because of the newborn lambs covering the hillsides when the festivals are celebrated. Although some breeds produce lambs year-round, ewes of standard breeds give birth in the spring in cool climates, and their lambs mature on new grass and fatten on vigorous late-summer grass. Traditional farm-raised lamb, then, is best in the fall and early winter, not in the spring. "Baby lamb," even if seemingly redundant, does mean something to the cook: low-weight lambs, slaughtered at three to five months,

whose meat is especially tender and sweet. Again, the commonest season for these in Europe and America is fall; New Zealand, with its different seasons, can export low-weight lamb in different months.

I recently rediscovered the lamb of my childhood, and found that what defined it was not age or season but cut. All of it came from the forequarters only, because I grew up in a kosher house. For years I wondered why the lamb chops I remembered from weekly suppers were so much bigger than the dainty loin ribs at expensive restaurants. They were cut from the shoulder, I learned, not the loin. My lamb cooking as an adult had been confined to the leg. Now that I know how much moister and tastier—and cheaper—the many cuts from lamb shoulder can be, I wonder if I'll ever bother with leg again, or even with the deluxe loin.

I also found how easy it is to cook fall-off-the-bone, wonderfully flavored lamb shanks, which are always a favorite dish when I travel to Mediterranean countries. Like chops, shanks can be cut from more than one part of the animal—and again the forequarter is best.

LAMB shoulder remains a popular cut in England, where it has been a traditional Sunday joint. Because its bone structure makes it tricky to carve, it long ago fell out of favor here as a roast. Butchers are less willing to bone a shoul-

by Corby Kummer

der than a leg, because the large amount of bone means a low yield, and the meat is less expensive to begin with. If you ask in advance, your butcher will bone and roll a shoulder. But even with the bone in, the shoulder is both an economical and an excellent roast, and it takes no time to prepare: just rub it with cut garlic, oil, salt and pepper, and chopped rosemary, and stick it in the oven. (The carving will be a challenge, though: aim to do it across the grain, angling the knife to cut parallel to bones rather than straight into them. For a holiday presentation you can bring the roast to the table whole and then whisk it back to the kitchen.) The meat you serve will be as tender as anything from the leg.

When roasting all kinds of meat I use the high-heat method practiced by Barbara Kafka, who is writing a book on roasting. The results of straight 500° cooking are so far superior to low-temperature roasting, which is really baking, that I've grown accustomed to smoky kitchens and dirty ovens. For a four-pound bone-in shoulder, her technique requires only forty-five minutes in a 500° oven, until the internal temperature just reaches 140°. I think lamb is best medium-rare, which is to say between 140° and 150°. Roast meat should always wait, covered with aluminum foil, at least twenty minutes before it is carved, so that the muscle can reabsorb liquid and fat; as the meat sits, it will reach the right temperature.

Kafka gave me a recipe from her work in progress for "wintry" lamb stew, which, in a reversal of the usual order, cooks first in the oven and then on the stove. Browning stew meat in a 500° oven for a half hour works remarkably well. You don't need to flour the meat or keep turning the chunks to get them crusty and brown; the only attention required is a good shake every once in a while. And if you trim as much fat as you can from the pieces, your kitchen won't even get smoky.

Arm or blade chops—commonly available prepackaged shoulder cuts that are easy to trim and bone—yield superior, if unevenly shaped, stew meat. To make the stew, briefly heat on the stove, in a large roasting pan, three pounds of chunked shoulder meat and a half cup of roughly chopped onions in four tablespoons of butter (you can reduce the fat and substitute oil for the butter) just until the meat

and onions are coated with the fat. Transfer the pan to a preheated 500° oven and cook for half an hour, keeping the chunks as separate as possible and after fifteen minutes shaking them vigorously or turning them with a spoon or tongs. Remove the meat to a pot and roast the onions another fifteen minutes; add them to the pot.

Pour off the fat from the roasting pan, put the pan over a medium flame, and add to it a half cup each of red wine and water. Bring the liquid to a boil, scraping up the browned bits, and then add it to the pot along with three or four cloves of garlic, peeled and halved, a 14-ounce can of chicken stock, an additional cup of red wine, and a quarter cup of veal glaze, if you can find it. (Veal glaze is rich, reduced veal stock—liquid gold, to my mind, and sometimes available in refrigerator and frozen-food cases; substitute chicken or beef stock or a mixture of the two if you can't find it.) Simmer, covered, for an hour and then skim the liquid carefully. Add a bay leaf and two tablespoons of chopped parsley leaves; a pound of parsnips, peeled and cut into one-inch pieces; a half pound of baby carrots, trimmed and peeled; and a one-pound celery root, trimmed, peeled, and cut into half-inch pieces (omit if you can't find one). Cover and simmer for twenty minutes more and skim again.

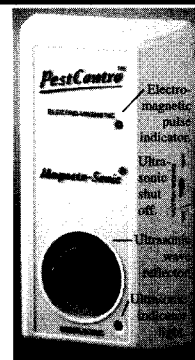
Thicken and finish the stew by whisking a quarter cup of cornstarch into about a cup of the hot liquid until smooth (or, for a cream-sauce consistency rather than that of a thick stew, use only two to three tablespoons of cornstarch). Carefully stir the slurry back into the pot and add to the liquid a tablespoon of anchovy paste and two tablespoons of chopped fresh sage. Bring to a boil and cook for five minutes more, until thickened.

Like all stews, this one can be adapted to suit the vegetables you can find and the season you're in: new potatoes and peas, for instance, will make it springlike. The unusual browning technique, the herbs, and the anchovy paste, which subtly reinforces the flavor, make this stew uncommonly good.

STRONG herbs take perfectly to lamb, and a recipe from the new *Union Square Cafe Cookbook*—by Danny Meyer, who opened that popular New York restaurant, and Michael Romano, its gifted chef—uses little more than herbs and

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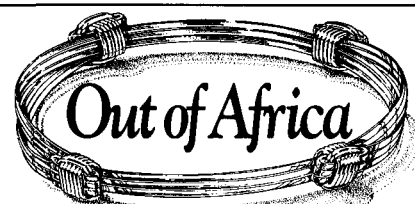
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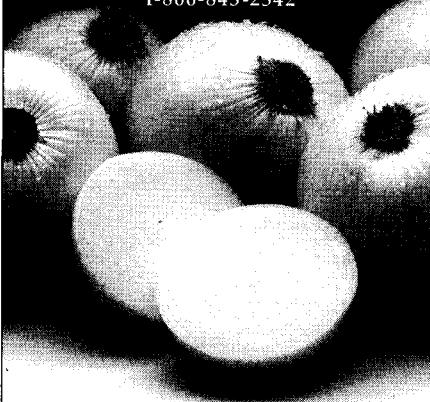
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stock to show how good and easy lamb shanks are. The long cooking at several heats, both on the stove and in the oven, demonstrates that it's virtually impossible to cook lamb shanks for too long. (A rival New York restaurant, Campagna, lists on its menu "Overcooked Lamb Shoulder in Red Wine and Herbs.") Like beef shin, lamb shanks contain sinews and other connective tissue that become soft and gelatinous, adding a buttery texture to the meat and giving sheen to the sauce.

I first tasted this dish at Rialto, a new Boston-area restaurant that saluted its New York friends this past winter, and was overwhelmed by how much meat there was on the plate. It looked like half a leg of lamb, and it practically was—the chef, Jody Adams, had used shanks from the hindquarter, which are cut from the lower half of a leg roast. Most restaurants are similarly generous, but at home it's much better to use forequarter shanks. Each will provide an abundant but not unmanageable serving.

The recipe calls for four lamb shanks; rub each with a cut garlic clove, and set the shanks aside. Sprinkle salt (preferably the sweeter and better-flavored kosher salt) and pepper on the shanks and turn them in two tablespoons of flour spread on a plate. Over a medium flame brown the shanks in two tablespoons of olive oil heated in a wide ovenproof pan that has a cover (you'll need it later). Or brown the shanks, seasoned and with or without flour, in a 500° oven for twenty to thirty minutes, shaking the pan occasionally. If you're daring, heat a quarter cup of brandy in a small pan, light it, and pour the flaming liquor over the nearly browned shanks, heating them until all the liquid has evaporated. This dramatic touch will give depth to the sauce.

Remove the shanks from the pan and add one and a half cups of sliced onion and five thinly sliced garlic cloves. Cook the vegetables for about five minutes, until they are softened but not browned. Add two tablespoons of chopped fresh rosemary, three tablespoons of chopped fresh mint, and a tablespoon each of fresh thyme leaves and chopped parsley leaves; if you have only dried rosemary, mint, or thyme, use a teaspoon for each tablespoon. Cook for another three or four minutes and then add a cup of white wine, boiling it until it is reduced by half. Add three cups of stock, preferably veal, season with addi-

tional salt and pepper, and return the shanks to the pan. Cover and bake in a preheated 325° oven for two hours.

The final step seems merciless, but it makes the dish great: uncover the pan, raise the heat to 500°, and brown the shanks for twenty minutes more. They will be crusty and tinged with black. Remove the shanks, cover them, and skim as much fat as possible off the liquid. Boil the liquid hard, scraping the bottom of the pan, until it is reduced by half.

It is indeed possible to undercook shanks, as I discovered when I rushed a dish of shanks braised with a sauce of onion, honey, sherry vinegar, green pepper, saffron, and paprika, from Nancy Harmon Jenkins's *Mediterranean Diet Cookbook*, which is full of homey, simple, and appealing recipes from many countries. I didn't brown the shanks long enough, and braised them in the cooking liquid (wine and Spanish brandy) at a mild simmer for barely two hours instead of the called-for two and a half. They were tough. I should have put them into a 500° oven, either during browning or at the end, to make them meltingly tender. The shanks rallied after lengthy reheating, proving the notion that long-braised dishes just get better when they're aged for a day or two. In fact, none of the stews I tried suffered from a cooking time that beforehand I would have gauged far too long.

YOU can order true baby lamb from Summerfield Farms, a source of the highest-quality meat, in Culpepper, Virginia (telephone 703-547-9600; they sell veal glaze, too). The meat is dry-aged for several weeks, which the owner, Jamie Nicoll, says greatly improves the flavor without changing its basic nature. You can do this with ordinary lamb by leaving it in your refrigerator, wrapped in wax paper or simply unwrapped, for two to four days—a trick to intensify the flavor of supermarket lamb, which is, odd as it sounds, often too fresh.

I once visited Nicoll and his wife, Rachel, during lambing season, when little lambs really do gambol up and down the dales. The couple's enlightened management of their flock paradoxically made me better disposed toward eating meat than I am at a distance. Their meat is powerfully flavored and in the tradition of farmers who care deeply about what they raise. It will honor your holiday table. 🍷

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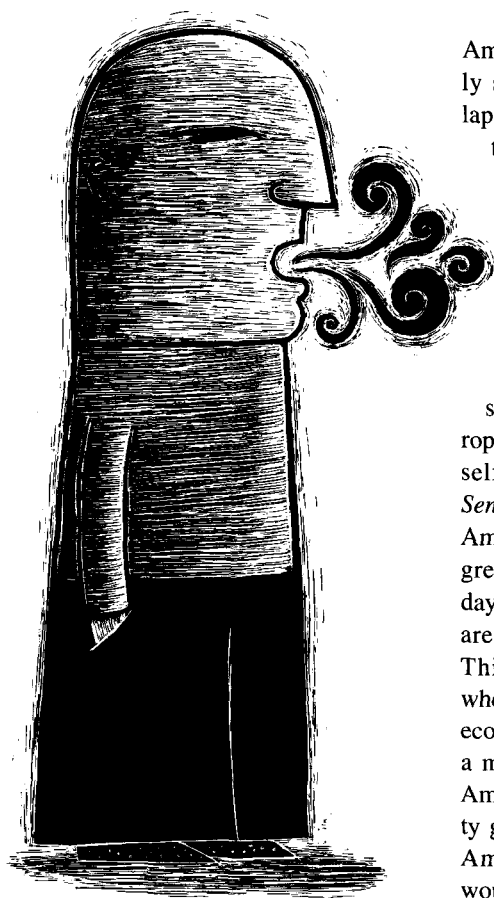
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The Coming Immigration Debate

An Englishman takes an alarmed look at a quintessentially American issue

by Jack Miles



**ALIEN NATION:
Common Sense About
America's Immigration
Disaster**

by Peter Brimelow.
Random House, 352 pages,
\$24.00.

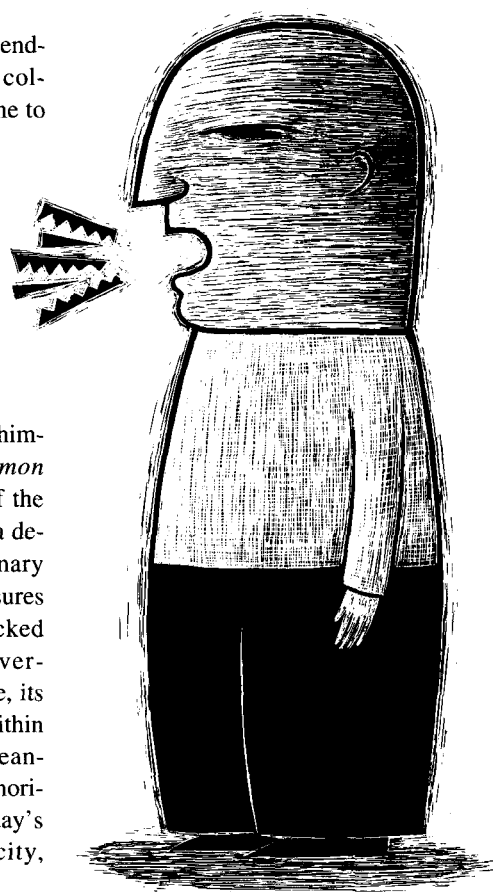
IN the late 1940s, when the Marshall Plan was being debated in Congress, Arthur Vandenberg, presenting the plan on the floor of the Senate, summoned up a vision of "270,000,000 people of the stock which has largely made

America." He insisted, "This vast friendly segment of the earth must not collapse. The iron curtain must not come to the rim of the Atlantic either by aggression or by default."

Nearly fifty years later Peter Brimelow, an Englishman by birth and a senior editor of *Forbes* magazine, has summoned up another vision of danger to the common European-American stock. Comparing himself to the Thomas Paine of *Common Sense*, he warns that the survival of the American nation-state is in peril to a degree scarcely seen since revolutionary days. Unless radical corrective measures are quickly taken, he says, unchecked Third World immigration will overwhelm the United States—its culture, its economy, and its ethnic identity—within a matter of a few decades. European-Americans will be just one more minority group in a nation that few of today's Americans, whatever their ethnicity, would any longer recognize.

Brimelow's vision of Europe and the United States (and, in particular, Britain and the United States) as ethnic brethren may seem as dated as Vandenberg's in the multicultural America of today. But in the national debate on immigration that may well dominate the 1996 presidential campaign, Euro-American nationality could be championed as the American nationality par excellence (rather than by default) by a majority that has belatedly discovered it wants to remain a majority. For that campaign Peter Brimelow has written what may prove to be an indispensable book.

This is so in part because of the highly contentious form the book takes. Brimelow



low serves up one imagined debaters' duel after another, with the final thrust invariably delivered by the author's side. Consider, for example, the following:

You hear a lot about PhD immigrants working in California's Silicon Valley computer complex. Just under 3 percent of recent immigrants had PhDs, as opposed to just over 1 percent of native-born Americans. But that's only, say, 30,000 immigrant PhDs a year. And have you heard that surveys show some 10 percent of Mexican illegal immigrants . . . were *totally illiterate in any language?*

You haven't? Oh.

Of his eristic method Brimelow writes,

Part of the cultural diversity I bring to the United States from Britain is a certain (ahem) contempt for American debating technique. I can't help it. It's inbred.

American competitive debaters are given their topics in advance and earnestly learn all the arguments by heart. But British competitive debaters are told their topics, and which side they must take, only at the last moment. They are expected to succeed by quickness of wit and whatever facts they can dredge (or make) up.

What Americans feel toward the English high style in debate is, I suspect, rather like what the English feel toward the clever French: we admire the biting humor, the hard brilliance, but we doubt the underlying substance, and we recoil in particular from the emphasis on wittily destroying an opponent rather than patiently and dialectically exposing all aspects of some important subject. This is why in the long run William F. Buckley Jr.'s faintly English accent and acid English wit have limited rather than enhanced the trust he enjoys even among his ideological allies. In these matters, for better and worse, America is Roundhead and plain, England Cavalier and fancy.

Ironically, however, Brimelow has produced a Cavalier briefing book well suited to the needs of Roundhead controversialists who, in the plodding American manner, will want to be prepared for anything the coming immigration debate may require of them. Brimelow calls the contending parties, with polemical panache, "immigration enthusiasts" and "patriots." Others have used the more neutral terms "admissionists" and "restrictionists." But either party may profitably imbibe this bottled brio. One side will be confirmed, the other forearmed.

Some of Brimelow's claims seem unproved, however intriguing—for example, his observation that America's ethnic groups are sorting themselves out by region.

California . . . is being abandoned by lower-income whites in particular, exactly the group that would appear to be most vulnerable to competition from unskilled immigrants. Much of this white flight is flocking to the intermountain West, which seems likely to

emerge as part of America's white heartland.

Less noticed, minorities are polarizing too. Asians move to California's Bay Area—they now make up 29.1 percent of San Francisco County—and to the Los Angeles megalopolis, even if they originally settled in other parts of the United States.

Brimelow might have added that some blacks are returning to the South. Still, if it is difficult to maintain the character of even an ethnic neighborhood in a highly mobile society, will it not be all the more difficult to establish and maintain an entire ethnic region?

A more serious issue, though amusing enough in Brimelow's telling, is immigration reciprocity. Brimelow formally inquired into the possibility of emigrating to several of the countries that send the most immigrants to the United States, and shares with us what he was told. Here are some of the opening sentences:

China: "China does not accept any immigrants. We have a large enough population."

Mexico: "Unless you are hired by a Mexican company that obtains a temporary work permit, or a retiree older than sixty-five who can prove financial self-sufficiency, you must get a six-month tourist visa *and apply in person to the Ministry of the Interior in Mexico City.*"

South Korea: "Korea does not accept immigrants."

Jamaica: "You cannot simply immigrate to Jamaica."

Egypt: "Egypt is not an immigrant country."

But if, as so many claim, immigrants contribute more to the economy than they cost, Brimelow asks, why are these countries not eager for immigration—particularly for a highly skilled, well-capitalized immigrant like him? The size of the population should have nothing to do with it.

One admissionist response might be that these countries should indeed encourage immigration and would be economically better off if they did so. A likelier admissionist response would be "America is different": these countries may rightly claim that they are not nations of immigrants, but America has a different tradition. Historically, however, as Brimelow effectively shows, the United States has experienced intermittent rather than con-

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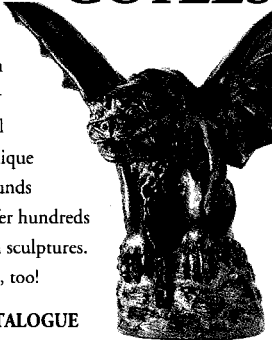
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tinuous immigration. Twice in the past we have deliberately interrupted the flow. We could do so again.

SHOULD we? This is the central question of the book and of the upcoming national debate. Before that question is asked, however, the mistaken belief that large-scale legal immigration to the United States is a purely natural phenomenon should first be corrected. Heavy immigration has not just happened. It has come about through political decisions. Many Americans remember the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Too few remember the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965. At the time, proponents of the new law, which ended national quotas and introduced the family-reunification principle, confidently predicted that it would bring about neither any dramatic increase in immigration nor any significant change in the ethnic makeup of the United States. Had either change been predicted, the law would not have passed.

Both changes, however, are now accomplished fact. In 1990, Brimelow reports, a staggering 1.5 million *legal* immigrants were admitted, of whom only eight percent came from Europe, including some en route from Asia or the Caribbean by way of Europe. In 1960 the U.S. population was 88.6 percent white. By 1990 the percentage of whites had dropped to 75.6, and the Bureau of the Census forecasts a further drop, to 64 percent by 2020 and to 53 percent by 2050.

Without congressional action this would not have happened. Do we want it to continue happening?

In other words: let's suppose that it would indeed be impolite to raise the question of ethnic balance—if a shift were occurring due to the unaided efforts of one's fellow Americans, resulting in different birthrates for different groups.

But how can it be impolite to mention it when the shift is due to the arrival of unprecedented numbers of foreigners—arbitrarily and accidentally selected by a government that specifically and repeatedly [in 1965] denied it was doing any such thing?

If by decision or inaction this process continues, then America will indeed be different—not just different from what it has been but different from every other nation in the world in its radical openness

to immigration. No other nation, as Brimelow's queries about emigration make clear, permits immigration by the hundreds of thousands annually on criteria no more compelling than "family reunification." None would dream of countenancing a tremendous demographic transformation for that reason alone.

If the United States chooses to make itself truly the great exception, the implications are virtually endless, one of them being a potentially profound transformation of black-white relations, as "now, suddenly, there are new minorities, each with their own grievances and attitudes—*quite possibly including a lack of guilt about, and even hostility toward, blacks.*"

In this regard Brimelow may be saying more than he realizes. Within living memory virtually all who immigrated to the United States became citizens, and all who became citizens took on American history as their own. Numerous poems and stories have been written over the years about the comedy and poignancy of this process. But more-recent immigrants, by no means excluding immigrants from Europe, evince little enthusiasm for what Lincoln called the "unfinished work" of building a nation on "the proposition that all men are created equal." They hold or divest U.S. citizenship on the basis of tax-savings yield just as some native-born Americans have done. Their attitude bodes ill for the United States as other than a business arrangement and particularly ill for what Gunnar Myrdal called the "American dilemma" of race relations after slavery.

Perhaps a few Americans formally espouse the view that their country is not truly a nation but only a political system, a kind of inherited calculus for reconciling the interests of a group of nations (or ethnic groups, to use the domestic designation) occupying a single territory. But even if we wish the United States to be no more than that, can we get away with it? Can the American political system—the polity, the state—survive the demise of the American nation? The state has survived past peaks of immigration by relying on the nation to assimilate the immigrants culturally. But if the nation can no longer assimilate new groups because it has itself become no more than a group of unassimilated, contending cultures, how will the state survive a continuous heavy influx?

Assimilation itself has come into some disrepute. Proponents of multiculturalism

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want to preserve the immigrant cultures and even languages rather than see them absorbed by a host culture. Even the mutual assimilation or accommodation of native-born groups one to another, though it continues, is questioned. The melting pot, once celebrated, is now sometimes reviled. Other metaphors—the mosaic, the salad—are preferred. True, some foresee a less separatist, more mutually appreciative multiculturalism—a new cosmopolitanism, if you will—on the far side of multiculturalism as we now know it. But will the new cosmopolitanism mature soon enough to guarantee the minimum cultural coherence that political coherence requires?

If there is any question about that, and, more important, if there is a serious question about whether immigration confers any economic benefits whatsoever, shouldn't the United States sharply curtail immigration, just to be on the safe side, given the other risks and stresses that accompany it?

UNSURPRISINGLY, Brimelow believes that there is indeed a serious question about whether immigration confers any economic benefits. Surprisingly, however, and perhaps prudently, he goes no further than this. He attends to no single topic at greater length than he does to economics, but he concludes that the economic case against the status quo in American immigration must be built into the cultural case against it. In the last paragraphs of the second of his two chapters on the economic consequences of immigration, he summarizes as follows:

It's a simple exercise in logic:

1. *Capitalism (and no doubt every other economic system) needs specific cultural prerequisites to function;*
2. *Immigration can alter the cultural patterns of a society.*

THEREFORE—

3. *Immigration can affect a society's ability to sustain capitalism.*

Let's leave the last word with [the economist] George Borjas . . . : "*The economic arguments for immigration simply aren't decisive,*" he says. "You have to make a political case—for example, does the U.S. have to take Mexican immigrants to provide a safety valve?"

Brimelow is a financial journalist and a political conservative. He knows perhaps

better than many liberal journalists that conservatives are divided about the economic consequences of immigration. Robert Bartley, the editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, notoriously favors open borders. Last November, William Bennett and Jack Kemp, conservatives who had campaigned against California's Proposition 187, gave the endorsement of their organization, Empower America, to an "Immigration Index" produced by the conservative Center for the New American Community. The index purports to show that, as Kemp put it, "immigrants are a blessing, not a curse."

Brimelow sees more curse than blessing. He observes, for example, that most Third World immigrant-sending countries are without income-redistributing social welfare. Accordingly, the ablest, richest people in those countries have little reason to move to highly redistributionist Europe or the moderately redistributionist United States. By the same token, the European poor have reason to stay home and the Third World poor have reason to come here.

Arguing against the importance of imported labor at any level of skill, Brimelow points out that Japan's extraordinary economic development has come about without the benefit of immigration. In a population of 125 million Japan has perhaps 900,000 resident foreigners; in a population of 260 million the United States has 23.4 million. And rumors to the contrary notwithstanding, Japan is not about to change its policy. Here is the response Brimelow got to his inquiry about emigrating to Japan:

ANONYMOUS JAPANESE OFFICIAL.
(complete surprise and astonishment)
 "Why do you want to emigrate to Japan? . . . There is no immigration to Japan. (Asked if there aren't political refugees or asylum seekers) There might be three people a year who become Japanese (*chuckles*). And even they don't stay long, they try to emigrate elsewhere, like the U.S."

The Japanese have achieved economic success without immigration secondarily because their high savings rate has assisted capital formation but primarily, Brimelow says, because technical innovation is more important than either capital or labor.

Brimelow implies, however, and surely he is right, that Japan's immigration

policy is ultimately dictated by cultural rather than economic considerations. When immigration policy comes down to dollars and cents alone, policy formulation may be postponed indefinitely. Each side will have its economists, and each month will provide new numbers to be crunched. Borjas (to whom Brimelow's intellectual debt is enormous) is probably right: what politics has done, politics must decide either to undo or to continue doing.

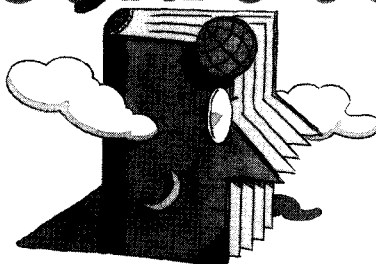
BRIMELOW himself is blunt about the political course he would have the nation follow. Here are some of his recommendations:

- Double the size of the Border Patrol.
- "Urgently" increase the size of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.
- Institute a new Operation Wetback to expel illegal aliens.
- If necessary, establish a national identity card.
- Go beyond employer sanctions to the interdiction of money transfers by illegals to their home countries.
- Make it clear that there will never again be an amnesty for illegal immigrants.
- Discontinue immigration for the purposes of family reunification. If family reunification is permitted at all, confine it to the nuclear family.
- Move the INS from the Justice Department to the Labor Department, and make an immigration applicant's skills the criterion for admission.
- Institute an English-language requirement for immigrants.
- Ban immigration from countries that do not permit reciprocal immigration from the United States.
- Cut legal immigration from the current one million or more annually to 400,000 (the 1972 Rockefeller Commission recommendation), 350,000 (the 1981 Theodore Hesburgh Select Commission recommendation), or 300,000 (the recommendation of the Federation for American Immigration Reform), or to an annual quota set by the Labor Department in response to the perceived needs of the economy (the approach taken in Canada and Australia).
- Cut back such special categories as refugee and "asylee."
- See to it that no immigrant is eligible for preferential hiring, set-aside college admission, or other forms of affirmative

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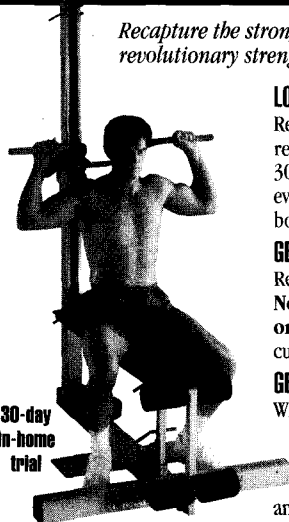
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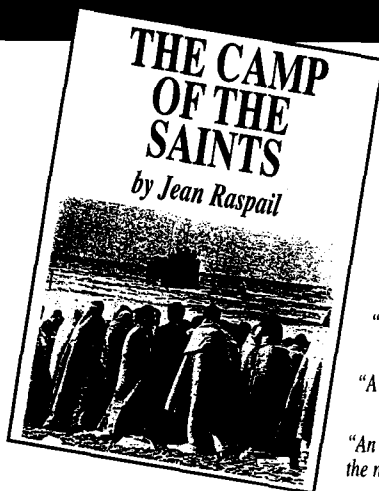
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- Consider repealing the citizenship-by-birth rule and lengthening the time of legal residence before naturalization to five or ten years "or even to fourteen years, as it was from 1798 to 1801."

I strongly agree with Brimelow that American immigration law needs to be reformed severely and quickly. And many of his proposals make good sense. However, his call for a new version of Operation Wetback—the hated federal program that forced a million illegal Mexican immigrants to return to their homeland in the 1950s—is worse than reckless. In a 40 percent Hispanic, heavily armed city like Los Angeles, the mass expulsion of illegal Mexican immigrants could not come about without a violent disruption of civic, economic, and even religious order, and probably not without provoking a major international incident. Such an operation could be implemented only at gunpoint, and it would be resisted the same way. Its announcement would be a virtual declaration of civil war.

Since the American Revolution was a civil war, this Tom Paine redux may know only too well what he is calling for. Returning to his hero in his closing pages, he writes,

It is simply common sense that Americans have a legitimate interest in their country's racial balance. It is common sense that they have a right to insist that their government stop shifting it. *Indeed, it seems to me that they have a right to insist that it be shifted back* [emphasis added].

In that passage the first two sentences may pass muster as common sense; the last is pernicious nonsense.

IMMIGRATION as a political issue changed the course of the last gubernatorial election in California, the nation's most populous state. In the next three most populous states—New York, Texas, and Florida—the issue is only slightly less salient. Among them, these four states virtually guarantee that the immigration debate will play a central role in the next presidential election.

President Clinton and the new Republican leadership in Congress are proposing

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different, rapidly evolving versions of a "National 187," imitating the California citizens' initiative that seeks to deny most government services to illegal aliens. Taking a further large step toward militant restrictionism, the American Immigration Control Foundation, whose honorary advisory board is heavy with retired military men, is distributing a questionnaire that includes the following:

America cannot control its borders because the U.S. Border Patrol has only 4,000 officers. That's not nearly enough manpower to control the flood of 3 MILLION illegals every year. Experts have proposed assigning 10,000 troops from military bases near our borders (out of a total armed services of nearly 2,000,000) to assist Border Patrol officers in stopping the invasion of illegals. *Do you favor such a proposal?*

Experts believe if Congress would assign as little as 2,000 military personnel who have been forced to retire early because of defense cuts, but who still want to serve our country, they could give tremendous assistance to our seriously undermanned Border Patrol. *If such legislation was introduced in Congress, would you favor passage of it?*

The Border Patrol itself would probably prefer to see the Armed Forces reduced slightly and its own forces enlarged. But the same huge California majorities that supported Proposition 187 would probably support the full militarization of the border if asked—particularly if the recent devaluation of the peso produces, as expected, a new flood of economic refugees from Mexico. But if such an armed force were to cross over from guarding the border to rounding up aliens for Brimelow's new Operation Wetback, I am confident that there would be armed resistance.

Has Brimelow completely forgotten the Rodney King riot? His suggestion that the proportions of the population be shifted back (*Back to just what?* one asks) strikes me as incendiary. I agree with him, as I have already said, that current American immigration law is worse than unwise. It can and must be revised, and the rate of immigration can and must be reduced. But even if, with luck, the further effects of a bad law can be checked, we have no real choice but to live with the effects to date of that law. And to do that we must

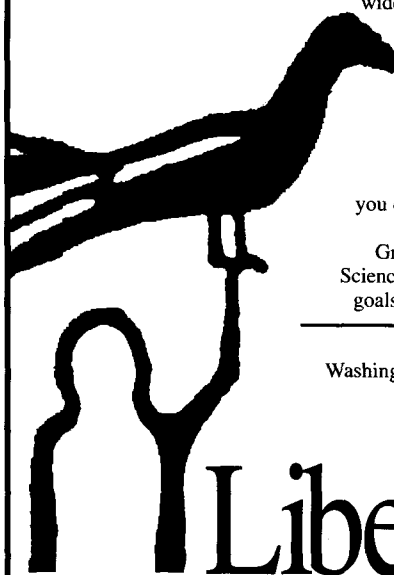
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The new once-a-year Atlantic Monthly Puzzler Contest premieres in this issue, while the Puzzler itself will continue its monthly appearances. Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon's first annual contest-puzzle, "Smorgasbord," (found on page 121) is designed to challenge even the fans who have solved the pair's past offerings. The winner will receive a \$150 gift certificate to Zingerman's, the gourmet-food mail-order house frequently mentioned in Corby Kummer's food columns as a source for high-quality ingredients. In addition, the winner's name will be published in the June issue. Send your solved Puzzler to: *The Atlantic Monthly*, Annual Puzzler Contest, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116. One name will be randomly drawn from among all correct entries received by April 15.

Rules: No purchase necessary. Only one entry per person allowed. All entries must be received at *The Atlantic* no later than 12:00 P.M. on April 15. No incomplete entries will be eligible to win. Prize will be awarded after a random drawing from among correct entries. All decisions are final. One prize of one gift certificate to Zingerman's, the gourmet-food mail-order house (retail value \$150). *The Atlantic* is not responsible for late or lost mail. Contest open to residents of the United States and Canada, except Quebec. Contest is subject to complete rules. For a copy of complete rules, write to: *The Atlantic Monthly*, 745 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116, and enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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create a national culture that does not define any large portion of the citizenry as American by sufferance.

Brimelow manages to combine fear-mongering and tear-jerking when he writes,

The U.S. government officially projects an ethnic revolution in America. Specifically, it expects that American whites will be on the point (53 percent) of becoming a minority by 2050.

My little son Alexander will be fifty-nine.

But little Alex and his kind already constitute only 75 percent of the population. And if the boy takes after his dad and lives in dusky New York rather than in that intermountain refuge for displaced palefaces which Brimelow sees taking shape, then Brimelow *filis* will belong to an ethnic minority, locally, long before 2050. How is he going to make his peace with that?

Not, I fear, with much help from Brimelow *père*, whose view of American culture from its very origins is almost truculently Anglocentric. The black proportion of the American population was greater at the time of the Revolutionary War (20 percent) than it is today. But Brimelow, who generally stresses the nation over the state, defines blacks out of the revolutionary nation because at the time they were defined out of the state. About the native population he has not a word to say. One may grant the unwisdom of swamping the current American population in new immigrants and yet insist that this nation is not now *and never has been* culturally as English as Brimelow wants to believe. The multicultural assignment, accordingly, is not one that this nation has taken on gratuitously. From the start we have had no choice about it.

Alexander, when he grows up, will have no choice about it either. It lies at the heart of the ongoing American nation-building enterprise. American (increasingly, even British) national identity is not a given. It is endlessly constructed. And it is the multiculturalists, with all their faults, who have taken this constructive enterprise in hand.

Writing in a splendid twenty-year retrospective issue of *Parnassus: Poetry in Review*, the poet Rita Dove offers a critical essay on the poet Derek Walcott un-

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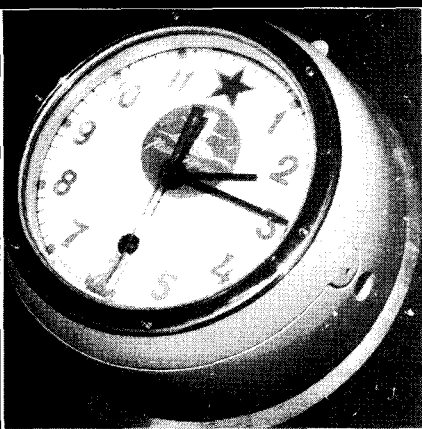
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der the title, borrowed from Walcott, "Whether I'm Nobody, or I'm a Nation." The challenge that Walcott has faced personally and artistically is to deal with his mixed identity: but if a black, even taken as a British subject on a chilly island, may be said to face the challenge of mixed identity in an increasingly homogeneous rest of us, and certainly in a world under Brimelow's benign eyescape.

Culturally speaking, the representation of the oppressed is often caught between a merely personal life, as against the collective, public life, the life of the nation, from Ralph Ellison. Invisibility of black women. But an artist must do more than a nation-building task of gathering the invisible, private lives of his community, and so delivering them into a public square, the life of the majority. However, that work will be not just the responsibility of the minority but also the responsibility of the majority. The challenge is to create an intellectual as moral, and as social, centered by semi-ritual, a sense of coherence. Dove quotes an African proverb: "graphical. We can't see the world as the poet's surrogate." In the end, the life "public" (public) is the only life. / In accurate location, the only life is the Caribbean, and the Caribbean is alike.

Brimelow, my friend, is a man of this. Few economists could be more since he rests in the world of the heavy immigration, and the economic conditions of the world, matters concerned by the world, entirely silent on those matters. In his readers David Black, 1991, in *Albion's Seed, The Roots of America*. But a man of the world comes when he comes to the question of whether a nation is a nation, similar to American and English, only than a million Englishmen.

This question was one of the Harlan's contributions to the 1991 presidential campaign. Addressing it, the *Street Journal* columnist Paul Gorman wrote, "The Zulus... would not only work harder than the English... the line was clearly a moment of Yankee humor. But Brimelow's line is a rebuttal.

It should not be necessary to explain that the legacy of Chaka, founder of the Zulu Empire, who among other things



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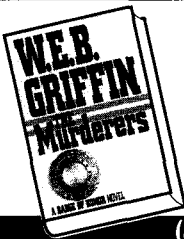
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plots killed all his concubines' children, sometimes with his own hands, massacred some seven thousand of his own subjects to mark his mother's death, sliced open a hundred pregnant women to satisfy a fleeting interest in embryology, and ordered executions at whim daily until his assassination . . . is not that of Alfred the Great, let alone that of Elizabeth II or any civilized society.

One would think that Gigot had been denouncing the uxoricides of Henry VIII rather than chuckling over British work habits. The emotion in Brimelow's reaction suggests, I believe, that an insufficiently examined personal agenda has compromised the author's public agenda; and given the special intensity of this issue, I fear that this personal agenda will do the public agenda no good. I say this with regret, however, for the central legal reform to which Brimelow calls his adopted country is one that desperately needs to be made.

At his best, Peter Brimelow is an in-

spired controversialist, determined to storm the enemy's redoubt where it is strongest, not where it is weakest. At his worst, he manages to be sentimental and brutal at once, holding little Alexander aloft on every tenth page while proposing a new Operation Wetback that would tear hundreds of thousands of Mexican Alejandros and Alejandras from hearth and home. Most at ease arguing the economics of the matter, he has the courage to admit that the matter can have no economic resolution and the greater courage to step forward as an apologist for the received Euro-American culture.

I regret that, having thus brought the matter to a cultural point, he goes no further than he does in cultural analysis. But for all that, he makes a powerful—indeed, nearly overwhelming—case against the status quo. And if his book is at times uncomfortably personal, it is also painfully honest. Sometimes it takes a personal book to make a public debate finally and fully public. This could, just possibly, be one of those times. ☼

BRIEF REVIEWS



Marie Curie

by Susan Quinn.

Simon & Schuster, 496 pages,
\$30.00.

A life of quick and easy success (unless that success is followed by tragedy) gives a biographer little dramatic material with which to compel a reader's attention. Ms. Quinn has no such problem. Maria Sklodowska was a Pole, born under the Tsarist tyranny, with a background of minor aristocrats and occasional revolutionaries. Because her immediate family had no money for advanced schooling, she worked for some years as a governess to support her sister's studies in France. When Marie herself reached Paris, she made quick progress to a degree, married Pierre Curie,

a fellow scientist, and set about examining certain oddities arising from the discovery of x-rays. She detected, and isolated, radium. In summary it looks easy, but it was not. The governess job was hard work and led to a disappointing love affair with the son of one of her employers. Her student days in Paris were spent in cashless hard study. Her marriage to Curie was a happy union of interests, temperaments, and productive research, but rewards came slowly. Curie had not attended the right schools—an important matter given the old-boy nature of the Académie des sciences—and Marie was (horrors!) a woman and not even French. She was not permitted to present reports of her discoveries in person. Her husband had to do it, although for the most part he had little to

do with her work beyond contriving lab space and equipment. Even in her honored old age she was suspected by some male bigots of being a fraud riding on her dead husband's achievements. Ms. Quinn's admirable biography demonstrates that she was far from a fraud. It presents a woman of great intelligence and enormous power of concentration, whose normally gentle and almost timid manner masked strong emotions and fierce determination. It also masked—imperfectly—a normal capacity for erotic indiscretion and professional severity. Madame Curie emerges here as an agreeably human genius.

Modern Japanese Diaries

by Donald Keene.
Holt, 544 pages, \$50.00.

Professor Keene has selected quotations from the diaries of Japanese travelers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, adding commentaries explaining who the diarists were and why they went where they did. The material will be of interest to students of Japanese cultural history. To other readers, it will prove that most Japanese resemble travelers of other nationalities, being distressed by unfamiliar food, bewildered by strange furniture and plumbing, and astounded by barbarous customs.

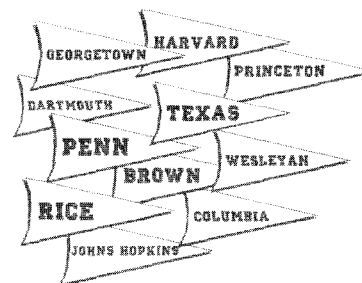
Thomas Mann

by Ronald Hayman.
Scribner, 512 pages, \$35.00.

The papers that the novelist ordered sealed until twenty years after his death have become available to Mr. Hayman for this biography, which is the kind commonly referred to as monumental. Monuments are normally large and impressive, but they are not lively. The term is appropriate, for vivacity is not among Mr. Hayman's skills and probably not among his intentions. He has included every discoverable fact of Mann's life, whether meaningful or not. The principal revelation of those sealed papers is that until he married, in his late twenties, Mann had only homosexual loves, and all his life he was intensely attracted to handsome young men—although his determination to appear, as well as to be, a great writer, and eventually a moral force for the preserva-

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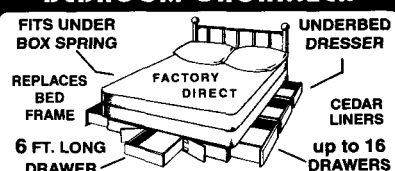
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tion of what he considered truly German ideals, seems to have deterred him from acting on such attractions. A full account of an artist's life must always be considered valuable, but it does not necessarily alter the merit or meaning of his work, much less explain his ability to do that work. Admirers of Mann's fiction will find no reason in this extremely detailed biography to shift their ground.

Endangered Pleasures

by Barbara Holland.
Little, Brown, 192 pages,
\$18.45.

Ms. Holland's amusing essays defend "Naps, Bacon, Martinis, Profanity, and Other Indulgences," and do it well. Her basic enemy is what she sees as overextension of the work ethic—a state of mind linking taxes to morality, "by which everything that produces taxable income is fine with us; losing your shirt at Las Vegas or Pimlico is unfortunate but morally okay; losing it at the Saturday-night poker game is wicked, because the winners won't be telling the IRS." The pleasures Ms. Holland celebrates produce no taxable income, and she is fair about her selection. There are, she points out, "those who disapprove of idleness, gin rummy, slang, song, unauthorized sex, naps, socialism, and jacuzzis for moral reasons. They enjoy it; moral indignation is a pleasure, often the only pleasure, in many lives. It's also one of the few pleasures people feel obliged to force on other people." Ms. Holland is not trying to force pleasures on anyone. She merely reminds us that many are there for the taking.

A Small City in France

by Françoise Gaspard,
translated by Arthur Goldhammer.
Harvard, 208 pages,
\$32.50/\$15.95.

The town of Dreux, sixty miles west of Paris and once a place where little ever happened, attracted attention in 1983 because the neo-fascist National Front party won a local election, ousting the socialist mayor, Françoise Gaspard. Her account of the affair is a level-headed analysis of the conditions that led to the victory of the extreme right wing: the rapid development and industrialization of a previously self-contained, semi-rural area, heavy immigration of foreign work-

ers, an unintentional division of the city into isolated ethnic enclaves, and the collapse of the national economy, which left people of all classes and origins frightened at best and unemployed at worst. This intelligently constructed book is not the apologia of a defeated politician. It is an ethnographic and social history of more than French importance, for the problems of accelerated growth and abrupt decline which the author describes are international.

Poems of Ambrose Bierce

edited and introduced by
M. E. Grenander.
University of Nebraska, 240 pages,
\$35.00.

Ambrose, nicknamed Bitter, Bierce did not consider himself a poet, and, Ms. Grenander's appreciative introduction notwithstanding, he was right. He was, however, an adroit writer of satirical verses savaging "railroaders," hypocritical priests and patriots, devious lawyers, and crooked politicians. (Like his contemporary Mark Twain, he would have considered that last adjective redundant.) He foresaw a time when

"Red-handed murder rioted; and there
The people gathered gold, nor cared
to loose
The assassin's fingers from the
victim's throat,
But said, each in his vile pursuit
engrossed:
'Am I my brother's keeper? Let
the Law
Look to the matter.' But the Law
did not."

Bierce fought for the Union at the start of his adult life, and the subsequent rise of Jim Crowism led him to complain, "I know what uniform I wore— / O, that I knew which side I fought for!" He died in Mexico, observing Pancho Villa's forces in another civil war, after a lifetime of varied, cantankerous, sharp-witted journalism. He wrote soundly—in prose—on literary matters; several such pieces are usefully included in this collection. Ms. Grenander is reasonable in requesting that Bierce be remembered for more than that invaluable work *The Devil's Dictionary*.

—by Phoebe-Lou Adams

WORD COURT

by Barbara Wallraff

For decades those of us in the Cleveland area have referred to our Cleveland Indians as the "Tribe": "TRIBE WINS DOUBLEHEADER." "TRIBE TRADES COLOVITO." "TRIBE LOSES 100TH GAME." It has been a long, painful history.

Now some modern teams are adopting singular nicknames that are being treated as if they were plural. We see headlines like "MAGIC LOSE TO CELTICS" and "HEAT FALL TO HORNETS." Complicating this issue are teams like the Utah Jazz (leaving aside the commonly held belief that there is no jazz in Utah, if there were jazz in Utah would there be more than one?) and the Barberton Magics, a high school's coinage that preceded all these newfangled

any (except in special cases, like the one I just presented) to how to treat a name that is superficially singular. "Magic lose" and "Heat fall" are indeed the constructions that the sports desks of *The Orlando Sentinel* and *The Miami Herald* say they would use (they would, of course, prefer to be able to say "Magic win" and "Heat beat"). These are not the only locutions out of the South that might strike a midwesterner as odd.

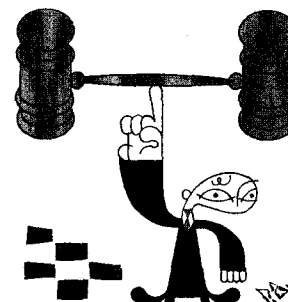
I'm not sure that I can adequately describe what's bothering me. What it is is—that's it! I call it the "double is," and I hear it almost daily. Perhaps the worst offender is the political commentator Cokie Roberts. How did this weird construction ever gain ascendancy over the simple declarative sentence?

David Fishbeck
New Brighton, Minn.

Cokie Roberts told
Word Court, "I have

no notion of what I say! In live broadcasting you just talk. The main thing is to get the point across." In the course of a ten-minute conversation she did not say "is is" once—and I'll bet you haven't heard her say it recently either. When people are told about their idiosyncrasies, they usually retrain themselves.

That's too bad—at least in this case. "What it is is . . ." is nothing worse than an idiosyncrasy, and it can be useful for adding emphasis. Furthermore, speakers deserve more leeway than writers, who have had the opportunity to revise. Now, you need never say "What it is is"—but will you try to tol-



erate its use by others? You might like it better if you think of it as a near relative, grammatically speaking, of the classic line, from *Cool Hand Luke*, "What we've got here is a failure to communicate."

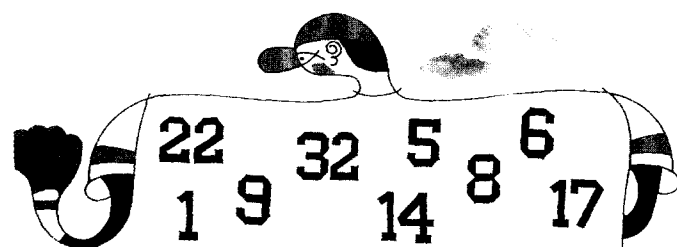
The Word Court column in the January Atlantic Monthly contained a glaring misuse of language. You said, "Have you recently had a dispute about language which you would like this column to mediate?"—but you are not mediating! As a professional mediator and graduate student in conflict resolution, I very nearly became apoplectic when I read that sentence.

Mediators help disputants reach their own mutually agreeable resolution without taking sides or making the decisions for them. Since you don't necessarily have anything to do with the other side in these language disputes, and since you have established yourself as a court and as the authoritative decision maker, there is no way you can mediate. By the way, you are likewise not an arbitrator. Arbitration also requires the voluntary submission of both sides.

Cris M. Currie
Mead, Wash.

I could show you dictionary definitions that leave me looking more punctilious than your letter does. Let me instead concede your point. It's your field, after all. And supposing I did disagree with you—whom could we possibly ask to settle the argument?

Have you recently had a dispute about language which you would like this column to resolve? Please write to Word Court in care of *The Atlantic Monthly*, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116, or E-mail MsGrammar@aol.com.

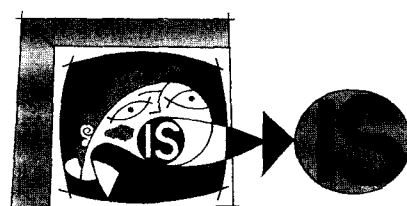


nicknames and always has been plural. I hate to think of reading "TRIBE ARE AT HOME TONIGHT." If I don't hear the answer I want, I might go on strike.

Dave Scott
Akron, Ohio

No doubt sportswriters new to your area can be shamed, if need be, into following local custom and treating "Tribe" as a singular noun. But local custom could just as well have dictated that "Tribe" be plural and grammar would not have objected, for the word is a "noun of multitude," which may properly be treated as either singular or plural. (Any given instance of the word must be purely one or the other, though. "The Tribe is planning to invite *their* families to the ballpark on opening day" is not allowed. In that sentence one would have to say *are*.)

In fact, any team name may be regarded as a noun of multitude, and local custom in the team's home town is as good a guide as



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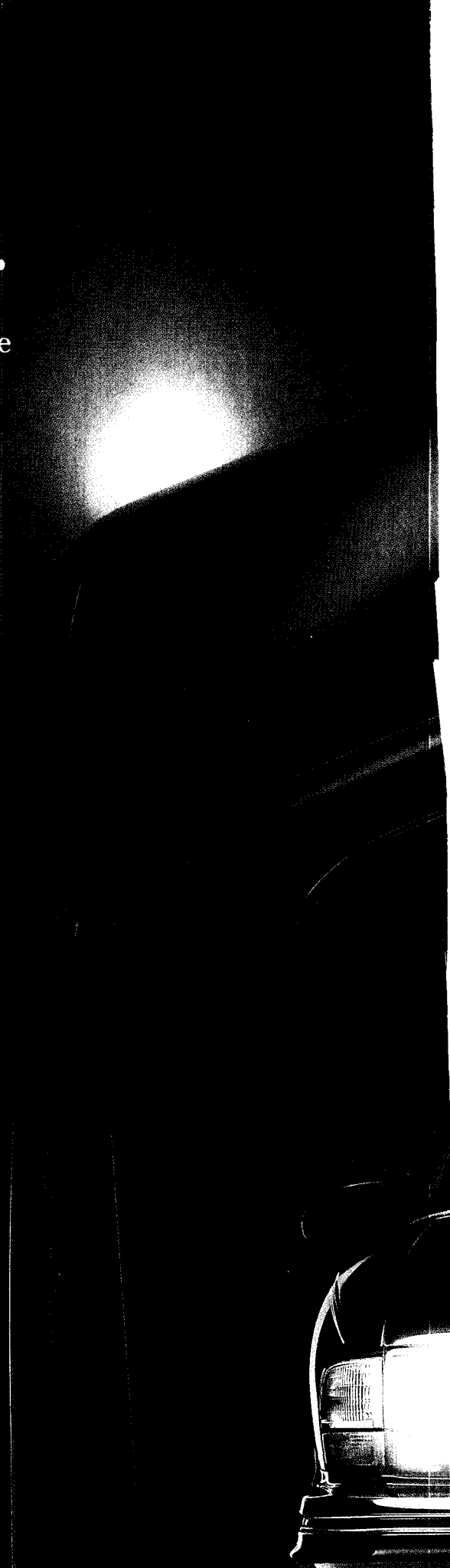
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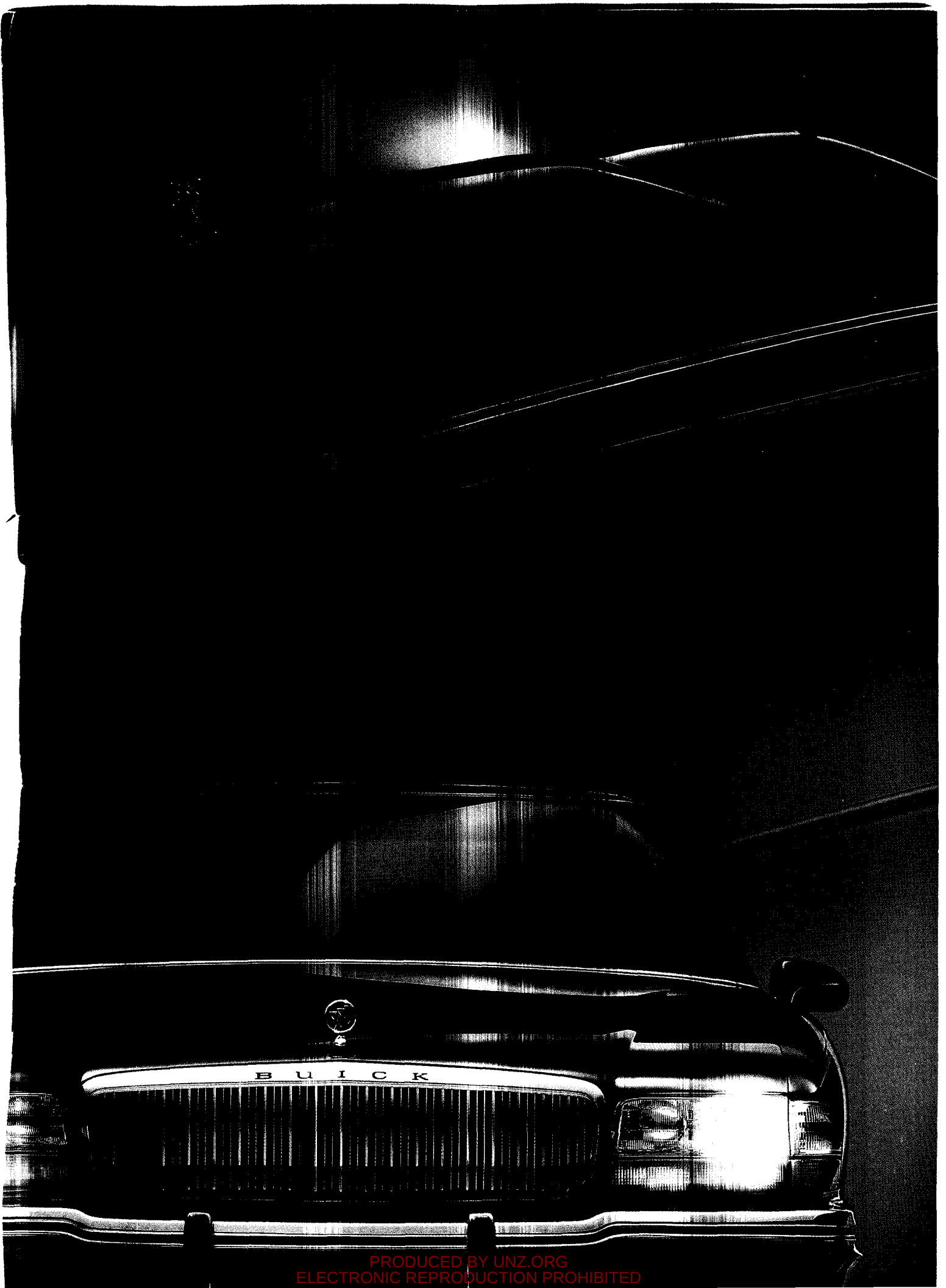
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